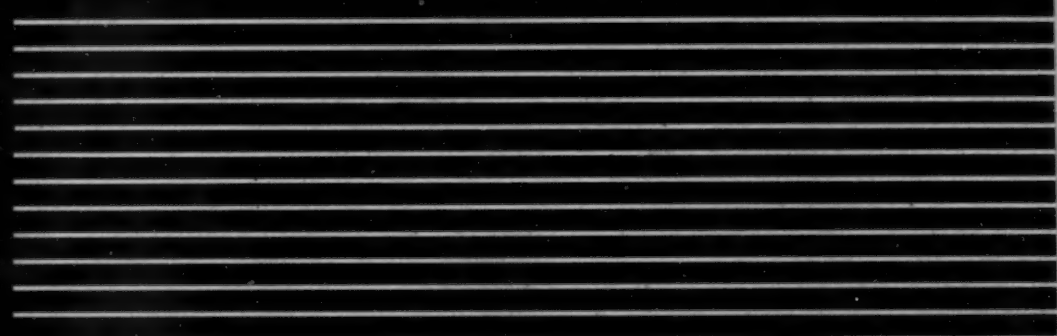


**COLLEGE**

**ENGLISH**



**DECEMBER · 1943**

# COLLEGE ENGLISH

AN OFFICIAL ORGAN of the NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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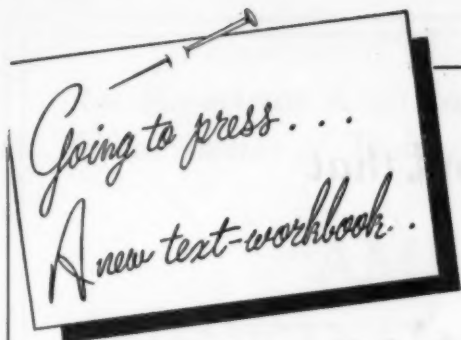
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# COLLEGE ENGLISH

Vol. 5

DECEMBER 1943

No. 3

## POETRY AND THE WAR

PETER DE VRIES<sup>1</sup>

On the island of Malta, one day shortly before the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Royal Air Force, the following message was received for a young British flight lieutenant: "Poem requested from Pudney for 25th anniversary 30 to 36 lines longish meter suggested. As required publication journal signal if possible if not fastest." The request struck the young lieutenant, John Pudney, as audacious and absurd, and he "decided at first to be angry," but on second thought he changed his mind and consented. "Finally it was pure vanity which made me decide to write it, because the idea of signalling a poem in the midst of a Mediterranean battle was, frankly, irresistible." He took his product to the censor, who was impressed, and presently a corporal was sending out: "28 line poem for 25th anniversary as requested begins stop fitters and riggers comma draughtsmen and engineers comma new line let us consider twenty-five years colon line. . . ."

The belief apparently entertained by the dignitary who sent the message, that poetry flows freely in time of war and is

produced as readily as water with a twist of the tap, is one that seems to be generally shared by the public. The first shot of World War II had been scarcely fired when the query, "What are the war poets writing?" became the most persistent literary question of the day. I should like to undertake an answer to it, in the light of the poets' immediate literary heritage, on the one hand, and, on the other, against certain popular expectations of the poet in uniform.

These expectations have a number of roots. There is, first, the tenaciously glamorous conception of both war and the poet, merged in the irresistible image of the singer gone a-soldiering. There is the arousal by war of emotions so intense that only art's most vibrant instrument would seem capable of giving them full expression. There is, perhaps, a desperate need to have a modern war, which at bottom we recognize for what it really is—a pure, anthropoid horror—given a transformation in terms of those human ideals without which the very thought of the present carnage becomes insupportable. And there is the memory of particular poets in the last war. Both the glory and the horror were represented in their poetry, which ranged from the buoyant idealism of Rupert

<sup>1</sup> Editor of *Poetry: A Magazine of Verse*, and author of the novels, *But Who Wakes the Bugler?* *The Handsome Heart*, and the forthcoming *Lie Down Young Yeoman*.

Brooke, who probably most encourages the conventional romantic image of the singing soldier, to the embittered realism of Siegfried Sassoon:

Alone he staggered on until he found  
Dawn's ghost that filtered down a shafted stair  
To the dazed, muttering creatures underground  
Who hear the boom of shells in muffled sound.  
At last, with sweat of horror in his hair,  
He climbed through darkness to the twilight air,  
Unloading hell behind him step by step.

What do we have so far, and what can we expect, from the poets in this war? Is there any war poetry? To what extent does the background of the young artists affect the possibilities?

No great familiarity with the young poets' immediate intellectual and literary heritage is needed to realize that anyone whose notions of war poetry have congealed about the recollection of Rupert Brooke might as well stop looking. The young men fighting this war grew up under the long shadow cast by the last one and came of age in an atmosphere of disillusionment and sophisticated, sterilizing skepticism. The idiom best practiced by the poets was a refrigerated understatement derived from T. S. Eliot, long the master-craftsman even to those who disdained his intellectual position. His critical dictum of impersonality was sovereign; only now is it first consciously being broken away from, notably by the new crop of English poets. Rhetoric was suspect. The young men were politically minded, wary of statesmanship, and down on the *bourgeoisie*. Poor *bourgeoisie*! The passage from the expatriate twenties to the socially conscious thirties—or from Left Bank to Left Wing, as one wag had it—left them little better off; for, where they had formerly borne the aesthete's contempt, they were now to endure the Marxist's impatience. The artist, then, was

at odds with society and pessimistic of its future. Disparaging Rupert Brooke, as is now the fashion, is, of course, easy; but he himself, had he lived, would probably have modified his own sanguine expectations of the uses to which his sacrifices would be put. Neither, on the other hand, are the poets now likely to write the opposite kind of verse represented by Sassoon, and for the same reason: having entered upon war completely aware of its nature and motives, they are not likely to compose poetry out of any lacerated disillusionment. Anger over this war is as scarce as optimism, the one being useless, the other impossible.

With the depression thirties there sprang up a new school of poets, led by W. H. Auden, who converted the poem into a clinical instrument for recording their diagnoses of the ills of a sick society. Wise in Freud, on the one hand, and Marx, on the other, they dissected both the subjective individual and society at large, simultaneously pursuing horizontal and vertical explorations that resulted in a curiously cross-grained verse evolving an increasingly private language even as it turned to more public concerns. They emphasized the political man in his relation to a society staggering to its doom under economic maladjustments and the threat of impending war. And here we must recognize the beginning of any answer to the query with which this discussion is concerned: the poets *had* been writing about this war for years before its actual outbreak. A jittery premonition of the hellbroth civilization was preparing itself pervaded great quantities of the verse written during the thirties. Even writing on so far removed a theme as the death of Yeats, Auden found it crowding into his elegy:



In the nightmare of the dark  
All the dogs of Europe bark,  
And the living nations wait,  
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace  
Stares from every human face,  
And the seas of pity lie  
Locked and frozen in each eye.

It was "a peace which was the mirror of old wars," as Horace Gregory put it. So abysmal was Stephen Spender's hopelessness in the face of the approaching shambles that he had to let his imagination vault into the future:

Readers of this strange language,  
We have come at last to a country  
Where light equal, like the shine from snow,  
strikes all faces,  
Here you may wonder  
How it was that works, money, interest, building,  
could ever hide  
The palpable and obvious love of man for man.

Oh comrades, let not those who follow after  
—The beautiful generation that shall spring  
from our sides—  
Let not them wonder how after the failure of  
banks  
The failure of cathedrals and the declared insanity  
of our rulers,  
We lacked the Spring-like resources of the tiger  
Or of plants who strike out new roots to gushing  
waters.  
But through torn-down portions of old fabric let  
their eyes  
Watch the admiring dawn explode like a shell  
Around us, dazing us with its light like snow.

When the war against which he, with so many other poets, had so long cried out finally broke, Spender thought that he could not write another line. He did, however, and his remarks on the pressure of the war and other contemporary events on the artist are interesting. He says in the foreword to his latest volume, *Ruins and Visions*:

I think there is a certain pressure of external events on poets today, making them tend to write about what is outside their own experi-

ence. The violence of the times we are living in, the necessity of sweeping and general immediate action, tend to dwarf the experience of the individual, and to make his immediate environment and occupations something that he is even ashamed of. For this reason, in my most recent poems, I have deliberately turned back to a kind of writing which is more personal, and I have included within my subjects weakness and fantasy and illusion.

The role played by the pre-war poets is admirably summed up in a poem C. Day Lewis wrote at the outbreak of present hostilities. Seismographically sensitive, as poets are, to disturbances collecting in the world, they knew that the war had actually begun to take shape some time before September, 1939, in Spain:

Where are the war poets? the fools inquire.  
We were the prophets of a changeable morning  
Who hoped for much but saw the clouds fore-  
warning:  
We were at war while they still played with fire  
And rigged the market for the ruin of man:  
Spain was a death to us, Munich a mourn-  
ing. . . .

It is in the light of this immediate background that we can best examine and assess the work of any new "soldier poets," youths who are at present both fighting and writing.

Of these, by far the most outstanding is Karl Shapiro, whose recent things have been sent from battle areas in New Guinea and other places in the South Pacific. Even before the publication last year of his book *Person Place and Thing*, he was being widely recognized on the strength of poems in magazines and a few anthologies. One may or may not go so far as Allen Tate, who finds his work to have, "for the first time since T. S. Eliot's arrival more than twenty-five years ago, that final honesty which is rare, unpleasant and indispensable for a



poet of our time." But he does have the most distinctive substance and incisiveness, the most authentic impact, of any poet, at least, since Auden and the English group. It takes irony of the most controlled sort to record contemporary disaster in the sardonic lilt of the limerick:

Now one by one the trees  
Stripped to their naked knees  
To dance upon the heaps of shrunken dead  
The roofs of England fell  
Great Paris tolled her bell  
And China staunched her milk and wept for bread

No island singly lay  
But lost its name that day  
The Ainu dived across the plunging sands  
From dawn to dawn to dawn  
King George's birds came on  
Strafing the tulips from his children's hands

Thus in the classic sea  
Southeast from Thessaly  
The dynamited mermen washed ashore  
And Tritons dressed in steel  
Trolled heads with rod and reel  
And dredged potatoes from the Aegean floor

Hot is the sky and green  
Where Germans have been seen  
The moon leaks metal on the Atlantic fields  
Pink boys in birthday shrouds  
Loop lightly through the clouds  
Or coast the peaks of Finland on their shields

That prophet year by year  
Lay still but could not hear  
Where scholars tapped to find his new remains  
Gog and Magog ate pork  
In vertical New York  
And war began next Wednesday on the Danes

The reader might suppose, and understandably, that the answer to the question "What is a poet writing?" might have something to do with the answer to the question, "Why is he fighting?" And the reawakened consciousness of America's role among the nations as a major exponent of democ-

racy might be one of his reasons, if he happens to be an American poet. This consciousness has informed much of the work of such poets as Sandburg, MacLeish, and Paul Engle, as well as the pulverizing prose of Thomas Wolfe—whose rhapsodies to the new world, in *Of Time and the River*, for example, for all their characteristic redundancy, do pronounce a final and resounding renunciation of that derogatory view of this country which the expatriate writers held after the last war. But with this now fashionable ecstasy over place names and old wheel ruts the young Shapiro will have no truck. He believes that the word "America" is "the chief enemy of modern poetry." In a recent letter to the editors of *Poetry* he said:

I feel that our whole critical attack is out of kilter. It is perhaps innocence that is most lacking in us and that is most needed and desired. If the critics discover that Yeats is the image that blossoms a rose in the depths of our heart they will turn savagely on him. Imagine the falseness of the present Whitman fad! *Still and still* ignoring *Song of Myself* for the geography of a nation, that stupid polyamericana, that absurd growth of his.

This impatience with current Whitmanesque incantation arises from a belief that it is glib, the annexation of a context rather than the re-creation of something the artist has himself lived, distilled out of his own nerves and guts and heart, which is the true matter of art, for which the verbal celebration of something apprehended rather than lived is only a reasonably accurate facsimile.

But there are other reasons why the most promising new young American poet disappoints expectant patriots. Some of these reasons may be temperamental, but one is this: he is still too intensely aware of those social ills and inequalities which leave so much to be desired in the country for which he is

fighting. From his station in the Pacific he sends a poem addressed to Jefferson which asks:

If vision can dilate, my noble Lord,  
Farther than porticos, Italian cells,  
Newtonian gardens, Haydn, and cuisine,  
Tell us, most serious of all our poets,  
Why is the clock so low?  
.....

How can you not assume the deities  
That move behind the bloodshot look  
and lean  
Like saints and Salem devils?

First-rate patriotic poems written during an actual war—or at any time, for that matter—are, as Eliot recently reminded us, rare in any language. And hatred of the enemy is conspicuously lacking. This emotion, the generation of which among the population is such an important factor in the mobilization of a belligerent country, is absent from the utterances of the poet. This is understandable and one of the most ironically humane lessons that war teaches. A sensitive person, like the poet, is likely to have his humanity deepened, rather than his patriotism intensified, by the terrible intimacy of war.

No, such resentments as we encounter in Shapiro are directed against the institutions and prejudices of contemporary life wherever they exist, and he knows they exist at home. He knows, with anyone who really *wants* to see a better world erected, that the line between friend and foe is one that cuts, in the last analysis, not vertically between nations but horizontally among them. And how drastically are not the prospects for patriotic poetry lessened at the hands of a skeptical and politically minded young man setting forth in World War II with this view of the Unknown Soldier of World War I:

And now the legion bones of Arlington  
Laid out in marble alphabets  
Stare at the great tombs of the capitol  
Where heroes calcified and cool  
Ponder the soldier named Unknown  
Whose lips are guarded with live bayonets.

Yet he shall speak though sentries walk  
And columns with their cold Corinthian stalk  
Shed gold-dust pollen on Brazil  
To turn the world to Roman chalk;  
Yet he shall speak, yet he shall speak  
Whose sulphur lit the flood-lit Dome,  
Whose hands were never in the kill,  
Whose will was furrows of Virginia loam.

But not like London blown apart by boys  
Who learned the books of love in English  
schools,  
His name shall strike the fluted columns down;  
These shall lie buried deep as fifty Troys,  
The money fade like leaves from green to brown,  
And embassies dissolve to molecules.

Then let the Negroes creep out of their scars  
And enter Alexandria  
To burn the clapboard and the straw  
And cast a vote for whiteness and for trees.

The reader asking what kind of war poetry is being written will have to make up his own mind as to whether *that* is a "war poem."

Side by side with the astringent Auden-Shapiro sort of idiom, there has flourished a looser, freer diction, a more expressionistic style often brightly dyed with surrealism. It is exemplified in the work of the young Welshman Dylan Thomas, in that of George Barker, David Gascoyne, Henry Treece, and Randall Jarrell, most of whom are in the Army. In many cases, even where the intention is not strictly that of surrealism, or is perhaps even far from it, as in the poetry of Oscar Williams, the surrealist technique is there: the riot of imagery, the phantasmal cast, a luxuriance of free association, the flotsam and jetsam of the oppressed psyche, all useful for the re-

creation of the anxiety, tension, and horrors of the modern world.

Where formerly he saw birds in bushes, now  
The cyclist resting from his uphill labours  
Observes the skull of Cromwell on a bough  
Admonishing his half heart, and he shoulders  
His way upward against the wind to the brow.

The political cartoonist in his bed  
Hears voices break his sleep he does not know:  
The morning papers show what the people said.  
Librarians in their studies, the lights low,  
Sense Milton breathing in his marble head.

writes George Barker in lines typical of this combination of pictorial extravagance and bold diction, this suggestion of dense and buried emotions tossing and smoldering in a general *Weltschmerz*. The consciousness of war and the general devastations of the machine age of which war is part and parcel permeate the most obscure emotions, invade everything from the meditations of an old man at evening to the rapture of lovers in the park. War is "total" in the human spirit also and was so for the poets, too, a long time before it was declared by statesmen.

The surrealist touch is now familiar, even to people who have probably never heard the word, being visible on book jackets, billboards, phonograph-record albums, and even in the movies—Don Ameche having been clearly seen striding among amorphous and eerie fragments of landscape in a sequence surely aided and abetted by Salvador Dali. But with few exceptions the poets have not done as well with it as have the painters, perhaps because it is suited only to the canvas and not to the printed word. At any rate, all the skulls and keys and other surrealist bric-a-brac with which verse has become cluttered have grown tedious. Repetition has long ago anesthetized us against their shock value.

Nevertheless, their appeal to artists bent on expressing a world's chaos and fragmentation in terms of an overwrought and premonitory consciousness is easily understood.

Dylan Thomas practices the technique with success. His imagery—lush, centrifugal, fused at astonishing high speed—is the work of a rich imagination:

How shall my animal  
Whose wizard shape I trace in the cavernous skull,  
Vessel of abscesses and exultation's shell,  
Endure burial under the spelling wall,  
The invoked, shrouding veil at the cap of the face,  
Who should be furious,  
Drunk as a vineyard snail. . . .

This is verse against which many readers will immediately bring the charge of obscurity, and it is obscure, though the essence beneath the knotty syntax and rather baroque diction is simple enough. Poetry is notoriously hostile to paraphrase, but the contents of the excerpt might be recast in prose somewhat as follows: How shall my creature essence, whose impulses stir continually within my skull, where good and evil contend and mix ("Vessel of abscesses and exultation's shell"), how shall I, the sensual man, who should be "drunk as a vineyard snail," etc., ever endure having to lie buried in a small grave, under a slab which spells only my mortal name and a few dates. . . .

Here is the primal sensual man turning from the mechanized desolation of our contemporary environment to an avid identification with nature and also, as in the following quotation from another poem, to a submergence in the whole race of man, with whose hosts of historical and mythological characters death—visualized not as a machine-multiplied

horror but as a natural and human phenomenon—shall at last link him:

For loss of blood I fell on Ishmael's plain,  
Under the milky mushrooms slew my hunger,  
A climbing sea from Asia had me down  
And Jonah's Moby snatched me by the hair;  
.....

With priest and pharaoh bed my gentle wound,  
World in the sand, on the triangle landscape,  
With stones of odyssey for ash and garland  
And rivers of the dead around my neck.  
.....

Green as beginning, let the garden diving  
Soar, with its two bark towers, to that Day  
When the worm builds with the gold straws of  
venom  
My nest of mercies in the rude, red tree.

Here is a human atom dissolving itself, by an imagination almost deliriously vivid, into the race and into nature. The title of Thomas' book, *The World I Breathe*, is significant.

The first eight lines of the above excerpt are comparatively easy to follow, so long as we accept them as a kind of free fantasia on the theme, projecting as they do this identification of the artist with the whole of man, and the ancient dead on land and in the sea, whom he shall join—Ishmael, Jonah, priest and pharaoh. The last four lines, which are, however, difficult, show the author's peculiar dexterity at expressing his experience directly in terms of his own richest personal associations as well as the patent weaknesses of the method.

Here he is rounding out his conception of death as integrally bound up with the processes of life: as "green as beginning." "The garden diving" is rather woozy imagery and not too felicitous a touch, but it serves to represent the idea of flourishing life—symbolized quite soundly in the garden—brought to an end. Then the word "soar" abruptly alters

the idea to one of exaltation, changing the image to suggest something that converts the moment of death from disaster to triumph, a transformation which the lines to the very end of the poem now carry out. The "two bark towers" suddenly magnify the simple garden into the Garden of Eden, for they, my dear Watson, are the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which stand as monuments to the two elements in man's nature, the physical and the psychic, or spiritual. And now something happens. The whole poem—and it is at this point that psychoanalysis, which has long lain in wait for us, threatens our little exegesis—blossoms into a religious fantasia full of biblical images half-obsured, and we seem to see the artist's sacred background irresistibly emerge in an explosion of Christian symbols still curiously telescoped with pagan, or earthly, meanings. What we have, in fine, is a sort of Death and Transfiguration—death at last given Christianity's more or less traditional radiance. The worm is only for a moment the old macabre symbol. Christ's martyrdom has converted the venom of ancient persecutors and that of death itself into a redemptive boon: "my nest of mercies in the rude, red tree" referring, of course, to the Cross. (The obscurity there is not too unheard of, the term "tree" for the Cross being thoroughly familiar to anyone who has ever sung from a Methodist hymnal.)

Amazing, Holmes; but, good heavens, man, is it all really worth it? Is what you get out of it worth the trouble it takes to figure it out?

That every reader must determine for himself in each instance. Sometimes it is difficult to extract, whole, the nut of an author's meaning from the intricate shell of his style. Much of Dylan Thomas is



not worth all the trouble. But phrases like "My nest of mercies in the rude, red tree" and "Altarwise by owl-light in the halfway-house" are the work of a poet with an ear! We have dwelt on him at this length because he offers such an instructive example of the peculiar difficulties and rewards of the kind of modern poetry frequently derogated for its obscurity. This is a many-sided question and outside the scope of this article; but the point ought to be emphasized that obscurity is not to be condemned per se, for such judgment would also be hard on many classic poets too, Donne, for instance, and Browning. In each case we must judge whether the substance is worth any extra application which the difficulties of thought or technique may require of us.

Dylan Thomas represents at its best a new strain noticeable among the young British poets which David Daiches has recently accounted as an open revolt away from the thin-lipped intellectualism of Eliot and Auden and toward a more spontaneous, personal expression—a romantic reaction, in other words. How far it will go no one can predict, or whether the current will emerge in any poet of importance. It is also impossible to foretell how the future inclinations of

artists will be affected by world events as they culminate—those world events which both the surrealist immersed in Freud and the Marxist occupied with politics have already been reflecting, each in his own way. Between the as-tringency of Shapiro and the lush expressionism of Thomas is a wide gulf; but, opposites though they be, they are equally contemporary results. It is conceivable that the war (and its outcome in the peace) may keep the young artists as aware as ever they were in the thirties of the truth of Thomas Mann's statement: "In our day the destiny of man presents itself in political terms." It is just as possible that the weight of it all may make them turn, as even so socially minded a poet as Spender did, to a more personal form of expression. We can only wait to see how time and events will influence the concerns of artists, pledged once again to Our Lady of Social Significance, brooding above the world-ash, or seeking the green tree. Or, it may be, expressing the new sense of humanity which we like to think this war is generating among us. Who knows but that this may be the burden of someone of great size as yet unheard from, who, with the night of grief still dark about us, prepares his *aubade* for the coming sun.



## MOODY'S "AN ODE IN TIME OF HESITATION"

FRANCIS J. AND ADALINE GLASHEEN<sup>1</sup>

When William Vaughn Moody's "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* for May, 1900, it was immediately recognized as the poetic utterance of genius on a problem which interested everyone and bewildered many. The problem was how to reconcile our imperialistic aims in the Philippines with the ideals for which this country was founded. Moody's ode gave expression to the misgivings which thousands felt. Many still remember the excitement with which the poem was received. Moody became at a bound the best-known poet of his time. He was recognized as a poet of surpassing technical skill and poetic genius; it was apparent to all that he was exercising one of the oldest duties of the poet: the direction of his country in a time of crisis.

The contemporary reader of the ode had an enormous advantage in his familiarity with the political scene. If anyone had forgotten Robert Gould Shaw, the principal figure in the ode, his memory was sufficiently awakened by Moody's explanatory note that he was "killed while storming Fort Wagner, July 18, 1863, at the head of the first enlisted Negro regiment, the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts." The reader could immediately recall the young man of good Boston family whose part in the Civil War had been so noble and so significant. Today both the political scene and "the good memory of Robert Shaw" have become somewhat dimmed. But the ode has

maintained its popularity, and Moody's reputation has become increasingly secure. We are justified, therefore, in wishing to know everything possible about the poem. What, for example, was the origin of Moody's interest in Robert Gould Shaw? What manner of man was Shaw? What was the significance of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, "the first enlisted negro regiment"? Exactly what happened at Fort Wagner? How did this bear on the political scene in the spring of 1900? How did all these things become a subject for poetry in Moody's mind?

In the summer of 1897, Moody visited his friend, Robert Morss Lovett, who was on vacation in Cortina, Italy. It was during this visit that Moody read in the *Boston Weekly Transcript* an account of the dedication of a monument to Robert Gould Shaw, the Civil War hero. The ceremony took place May 31, 1897, in Music Hall in Boston. The governor of Massachusetts, the mayor of Boston, Augustus St. Gaudens who made the statue, and innumerable veterans and friends of Shaw were present. William James, whose brother Garth had been Shaw's adjutant, made an oration. The Lovetts received the paper in Italy, and Professor Lovett says that William James's speech, which was printed only in part in the newspaper, supplied the keynote of "An Ode in Time of Hesitation."<sup>2</sup>

Of the various speeches printed in the newspaper, William James's was easily

<sup>2</sup> June 4, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> *Selected Poems of William Vaughn Moody*, ed. Robert Morss Lovett, *Introd.*, pp. xliii-xliv.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Glasheen, formerly a member of the faculty of Danbury Teachers College, Connecticut, is now in the United States Army. Mrs. Glasheen teaches at Wheaton College, Norton, Mass.

the most interesting and the most informative. He undoubtedly had heard much from his brother about Shaw and the attack on Fort Wagner, and he also used the letters which Shaw's mother had published in her account of Robert Gould in *Harvard Memorial Biographies*. The excerpts from James's speech stressed principally the significance of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts and events at Fort Wagner. "The very lack of external complication in the history of these soldiers," said James, "is what makes them represent with such typical purity the profounder meaning of the Union cause."<sup>4</sup> This point of view supplied Moody with his conception of Shaw and his regiment as the symbol and embodiment of the ideal for which the Civil War was fought, an ideal which he traced to the very founding of the Union—the freedom and equality of all men. James's description of the Fifty-fourth as it awaited the signal to storm Fort Wagner furnished details which Moody was to use in the composition of his poem:

For two nights previous to the assault upon Fort Wagner the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment had been afoot making forced marches in the rain; and on the day of the battle the men had had no food since early morning. As they lay there in the evening twilight, hungry and wet, against the cold sands of Morris Island, with the sea-fog drifting over them, their eyes fixed on the huge bulk of the fortress looming darkly three-quarters of a mile ahead against the sky, and their hearts beating in expectation of the word that was to bring them to their feet and launch them on their desperate charge, neither officers nor men could have been in any holiday mood of contemplation.<sup>5</sup>

The impression of quiet bravery on the part of the Fifty-fourth fitted very well the occasion of James's speech—the survivors of the attack were in the audience

—but we shall see that all the firsthand testimony does not agree on this point, a fact which indicates all the more clearly that Moody was influenced by James's account. The manner of Shaw's burial was not without significance, and James made much of it:

Shaw's body, stripped of its clothing, and the corpses of his dauntless negroes were flung into one common trench together, and the sand was shovelled over them, without a stake or stone to signalize the spot. In death as in life, then, the Fifty-fourth bore witness to the brotherhood of man.<sup>6</sup>

Another article in the *Transcript* reprints portions of an address before the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts by Colonel Norwood P. Hallowell. His praise of Shaw is lavish, but it is typical of the veneration in which Shaw was held. He found the young Colonel "the best historical exponent of the underlying cause, the real meaning of the war. He was the fair type of all that was brave, generous, beautiful, and of all that was best worth fighting for in the war of the slaveholder's Rebellion."<sup>7</sup>

At the outbreak of the war, Shaw enlisted as a private in the Seventh Regiment, New York National Guard. This was one of the first regiments to march after the President called for troops. Shaw was soon commissioned in the Second Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry. Two years later, in February, 1863, he was offered the command of the new colored infantry, the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts. He hesitated to accept the position solely because he did not think himself equal to the responsibility, but finally he accepted and wrote to his mother:

I feel convinced I shall never regret having taken this step, as far as I myself am concerned;

<sup>4</sup> *Boston Weekly Transcript*, June 4, 1897.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

for while I was undecided I felt ashamed of myself, as if I were cowardly.<sup>8</sup>

The use of colored troops was a doubtful experiment, and the command of such an infantry made for moral rather than for social prestige. From the moment of its organization the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts was watched with interest. Some northern states saw an opportunity to get rid of their Negroes and urged them "on to Massachusetts." No one expected much of the colored troops under fire: some were openly scornful. When Captain Garth James and a fellow-officer left the Forty-fourth Massachusetts to join the Fifty-fourth, their friends in the Forty-fourth cheered and jeered.<sup>9</sup> After completing its training, the Fifty-fourth went to Boston to embark for South Carolina on May 28, 1863. As they marched through the streets of Boston, says Captain James, there were "... alternating cheers and groans ... alternate huzza and reproach which attempted to deafen each other on our march down State Street."<sup>10</sup> It is typical of the conflict in testimony regarding the Fifty-fourth that Shaw, himself, heard no disapproval. From the steamer "De Molay," off Cape Hatteras, he wrote to his family: "Every one I saw, from the Governor's staff (who have always given us rather the cold shoulder) down, had nothing but words of praise for us."<sup>11</sup> In South Carolina the Fifty-fourth was soon tested.

On July 16, while the Fifty-fourth was on outpost duty near Grimball's Land-

ing on James Island, they engaged in a skirmish with a squadron of enemy cavalry and repulsed them. Brigadier General Alfred H. Terry, in command of Union troops, wrote in his report of their "steadiness and soldierly conduct."<sup>12</sup> Shaw wrote home:

The Tenth Connecticut were on their left, and say they should have had a bad time if the Fifty-fourth men had not stood so well.<sup>13</sup>

Captain James was proud to have led "heroic negro soldiers on to victorious battle for the first time in the history of the War."<sup>14</sup>

Two days after this auspicious introduction to battle, the Fifty-fourth was landed on Morris Island to take part in an attack on Fort Wagner. The attack had been planned for some time, but inevitable military difficulties had forced its postponement to July 18. Captain James describes Morris Island as "a mere mass of undulating sand heaps, rising from a long stretching beach to heights varying from three feet to perhaps forty feet above high water level."<sup>15</sup> Fort Wagner was one of the best earth-works in the world; against it eight hours of artillery fire throughout the day had been of no use at all. Later, Brigadier General Gillmore admitted that the great strength of the fort had been very much underestimated.<sup>16</sup> Shaw was offered, and he immediately accepted, the foremost place in one of the attacking columns.

The attack began about 7:45 in the evening. The evidence as to the conduct of the Fifty-fourth during the attack

<sup>8</sup> *Harvard Memorial Biographies* (Cambridge, 1866), II, 203.

<sup>9</sup> Garth James, "The Assault on Fort Wagner," *War Papers* (Milwaukee: Commandery of Wisconsin, Military Order the Loyal Legion of the United States, 1891), I, 11.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>11</sup> *Harvard Memorial Biographies*, II, 204.

<sup>12</sup> *The War of the Rebellion* (Ser. I), XXVIII, Part I, 755.

<sup>13</sup> *Harvard Memorial Biographies*, II, 206.

<sup>14</sup> Garth James, *op. cit.*, I, 19.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 16.

<sup>16</sup> *The War of the Rebellion* (Ser. I), XXVIII, Part I, 13.

varies according to its source. Gillmore says in his report that, as the head of the attacking column approached the fort,

.... a compact and most destructive musketry fire was instantly delivered from the parapet by the garrison. The troops went gallantly on, however, and although the leading regiment was soon thrown into a state of disorder, which reacted disadvantageously upon those which followed, and rendered it necessary to send in the supporting brigade, the southeast bastion was gained, and held by us for nearly three hours.<sup>17</sup>

The general nature of this report did not allow Gillmore to go into detail about the action, and he could not know all that had happened on the Confederate side. The southeast bastion was, indeed, gained, though the Union success at this point was probably due to the Thirty-first Regiment, North Carolina, which "could not be induced to occupy their position" but lurked in the bombproof shelters instead of defending the bastion.<sup>18</sup>

The reports of those who took part in the attack agree that the fire from the fort was withering. Captain James says that, as the Fifty-fourth neared the fort, .... the line of battle melted almost away; it had become an excited mass of men unable through the reaping fire to close up, the ranks mowed down at almost every step. ....<sup>19</sup>

Colonel Edward N. Hallowell, who commanded the left wing of the Fifty-fourth, also gave much credit to the courage of the colored troops in the face of this devastating fire:

Exposed to the direct fire of canister and musketry, and, as the ramparts were mounted, to a like fire on flanks, the havoc made in our ranks was very great. Upon leaving the ditch

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 418, report of Brigadier General William B. Taliaferro, Confederate; see also R. C. Gilchrist, "Confederate Defense of Morris Island," *Year Book—1884—City of Charleston, So. Ca.*, p. 367.

<sup>19</sup> Garth James, *op. cit.*, I, 23.

for the parapet, they obstinately contested with the bayonet our advance. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the men succeeded in driving the enemy from most of their guns, many following the enemy into the fort. .... The colors of the regiment reached the crest. ....

The fight raged here about an hour.<sup>20</sup>

The *New York Times* praised the action of the Fifty-fourth under such difficult circumstances and reported their retreat in plain terms:

.... The Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, led by its gallant Col. Shaw, was within two hundred yards of the work, when the men gave a fierce yell and rushed up the glacis, closely followed by the other regiments of the brigade. ....

The gallant negroes, however, plunged on regardless of this murderous reception, and many of them crossed the ditch, although it contained four feet of water, gaining the parapet. They were dislodged, however, in a few minutes with hand grenades, and retired helter-skelter ....<sup>21</sup>

In the report of Brigadier General Truman Seymour, Union, the retreat is described in detail:

.... the wounded, and many unhurt also, were coming thickly from the front, along the beach. General Strong had urged his command on with great spirit and gallantry, but his losses had been so severe that his regiments were much shaken, and the consequent confusion was much heightened by the yielding of the leading regiment, large portions of which fell harshly upon those in their rear.<sup>22</sup>

Brigadier General Johnson Hagood, Confederate, reported simply: "The enemy's infantry fought badly."<sup>23</sup> It will be seen that there is considerable variation in the accounts of the Fifty-fourth's part in the attack. Perhaps the most favorable account is that of Charles Cowley, Judge

<sup>20</sup> *The War of the Rebellion* (Ser. I), XXVIII, Part I, 362.

<sup>21</sup> July 27, 1863.

<sup>22</sup> *The War of the Rebellion* (Ser. I), XXVIII, Part I, 347.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 586.



Advocate, South Atlantic Blockading Squadron:

Colonel Robert G. Shaw led the attack. . . . They went forward at "double quick" with great energy and resolution; but on approaching the ditch they broke: the greater part of them followed their intrepid colonel, bounded over the ditch, mounted the parapet, and planted their flag in the most gallant manner upon the ramparts . . . while the rest were seized with a furious panic, and acted like wild beasts let loose from a menagerie. They came down first on the Ninth Maine, and then on the Seventy-sixth Pennsylvania, and broke both of them in two. Portions of the Ninth and Seventy-sixth mingled with the fugitives of the Fifty-fourth, and could not be brought to the fort. They ran away like deer, some crawling upon their hands and knees.<sup>24</sup>

Cowley's description of the panic is so vivid that it is easy to overlook the fact that the greater part of the regiment followed Shaw.

Shaw's part in the attack made him a national hero at once. General Saxton, Union, urged the colored soldiers of his department to use the first money they earned as freemen to erect a monument to Shaw on the spot where he fell.<sup>25</sup> The *New York Times* printed an editorial praising Shaw highly and speaking of him as a "patriot and martyr."<sup>26</sup> James Russell Lowell, who knew Shaw's father and mother, wrote an ode, "Memoriae Positum," in his memory. "The best verse," he wrote to Mrs. Shaw, "falls short of noble living and dying such as his."<sup>27</sup> Moody's independence of Low-

ell's ode is remarkable. To give his poem "something of the formality of an epitaph,"<sup>28</sup> Lowell used a regular stanza, rhyming abbaccadda. He wrote to James T. Fields, his publisher: "I wanted the poem a little monumental, perhaps I have made it obituary."<sup>29</sup> With this stiff formality the easy grace of Moody's ode contrasts very favorably. Lowell's ideas are commonplace—why mourn a loss that makes us richer?—Shaw has found "heart's-ease not rue"—his death will be an inspiration to those who must learn to die for noble ends. There is nothing in "Memoriae Positum" of the wide applicability which we find in Moody's ode. Lowell's poem was published in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January, 1864, and it may be assumed that Lowell's reputation added to the fame of the subject.

The idea of a suitable memorial to Shaw was first proposed in Boston in 1865. Interest in the proposal fluctuated for almost twenty years, and finally, on February 23, 1884, a contract was signed with Augustus St. Gaudens for a high relief. As St. Gaudens worked on the statue, his conception of it developed, and the work required twelve years. In 1897 the statue was erected on the Boston Common, with an inscription from Lowell's ode and various other suitable quotations, among them two lines by Mrs. Waterston, beginning "O fair-haired northern hero. . . ."

When Moody returned from Italy in the summer of 1897, he went at once to see the statue. It is either this visit, changed to a spring setting for poetic purposes, or a later one that he speaks of at the opening of the ode. Lowell had used the simple device of the autumn breeze to start his train of thought, and

<sup>24</sup> *Leaves from a Lawyer's Life Afloat and Ashore* (Lowell, Mass., 1879), pp. 92-93; quoted in R. C. Gilchrist, "Confederate Defense of Morris Island," *Year Book—1884—City of Charleston, So. Ca.*, pp. 367-68, which is cited by D. M. McKeithan, "A Note on William Vaughn Moody's 'An Ode in Time of Hesitation,'" *Amer. Lit.*, IX (November, 1937), 349-51.

<sup>25</sup> *New York Times*, August 5, 1863.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, August 7, 1863.

<sup>27</sup> *Letters of James Russell Lowell*, ed. C. E. Norton, I, 327.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 191.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 333-34.



Moody uses the sound of spring coming up the land to establish certain spiritual affinities. The coming of spring is "not unheard of this boy soldier and his negro band," whose high fate makes them solicitous still for the country for which they died. A brief mention of the country's pangs, her trembling and waiting, introduces the chief theme of the poem. Moody then develops the spring theme, giving a sweeping view of the country from Cape Ann to the West Coast in a passage which is justly celebrated for its powerful and objective poetry. Beyond the West is Hawaii, "Where East and West are met"—an East and a West that must remain as separate as they were created by the Lord. Thus the conclusion of the third section of the ode gives more specifically the cause of the pangs which were introduced at the end of the first section. At the opening of the fourth section, the poet's song is interrupted by "Sounds of ignoble battle" that come "Sullenly over the Pacific seas." At the very moment of his ecstasy in the glory of spring, the poet is forced to consider the part his country is playing in the war in which it is engaged.

The United States had entered the Spanish-American War with the best of motives; it wished merely to liberate downtrodden Cuba from Spain. Over this there was no division of sentiment in the nation. But only ten days after Congress passed a Joint Resolution to use armed forces to help Cuba, Admiral Dewey destroyed the Spanish fleet in Manila Bay. Thus the Philippines, of which many in this country had never heard before April 30, 1898, became involved. After the peace treaty was signed on August 12, 1898, the federal government was uncertain what it ought to do about the islands. The whole problem was tied up with the question of our

becoming a world power—a destiny that seemed manifest to some, like Albert J. Beveridge, the senator from Indiana, and almost treasonable to others, like George Frisbie Hoar, the senator from Massachusetts. The business interests were strongly in favor of opening up new markets, some religious groups wanted to Christianize the islands which had been Catholic for three hundred years. On December 10, 1898, by the terms of the Treaty of Paris, the United States paid Spain \$20,000,000 and took over all the Philippine Islands. After violent congressional debates, the treaty was ratified on February 6, 1898. Two days earlier some of Aguinaldo's troops, who had helped us crush Spain, refused to halt for an American sentinel, and we were now at war with the Filipinos—whose freedom we had just won—to force them to accept American rule. Leaders in every field—Eliot of Harvard, William James, Mark Twain, William Jennings Bryan, Jane Addams—were outspoken against the policy of the national government. Anti-imperialist groups were organized in every city in the country. On June 15, 1898, an anti-imperialist mass meeting was held in Faneuil Hall, Boston. Moody was in Boston at this time. A Liberty Meeting was held at Central Music Hall, Chicago, April 30, 1899. Several of Moody's friends—Paul Shorey, J. R. Angell, William Morton Payne, and H. B. Fuller—were among those who urged attendance at this meeting. At this time Moody was in London, but two months later, when the fervor of the anti-imperialists continued unabated, he was in Chicago, and it is reasonable to assume that he talked at length with his friends about the anti-imperialist movement.

To many people, Moody among them, a great moral issue was involved. If the country followed its pursuit of world

power, what of the freedom and justice and brotherly love in which this country was founded? In battle we had always been secure in the righteousness of our cause; this, to Moody, was one of the loftiest of our ideals:

The wars we wage  
Are noble, and our battles still are won  
By justice for us, ere we lift the gage.  
We have not sold our loftiest heritage.

In witness of this Moody returns to the theme with which he began the ode, "the good memory of Robert Shaw,"

this, her perfect son,  
This delicate and proud New England soul  
Who leads despised men, with just-unshackled  
feet,  
Up the large ways where death and glory meet.

....

William James, as we have seen, had represented Shaw and his regiment as the embodiment of the ideals which seemed to Moody to be threatened by the new policy of imperialism. When Moody now tells the story of Shaw and his men, he draws from James such material as he wishes to use:

Crouched in the sea fog on the moaning sand  
All night he lay, speaking some simple word  
From hour to hour to the slow minds that heard,  
Holding each poor life gently in his hand  
And breathing on the base rejected clay  
Till each dark face shone mystical and grand  
Against the breaking day;  
And lo, the shard the potter cast away  
Was grown a fiery chalice crystal-fine  
Fulfilled of the divine  
Great wine of battle wrath by God's ring-finger  
stirred.  
Then upward, where the showy bastion loomed  
Huge on the mountain in the wet sea light,  
Whence now, and now, infernal flowerage  
bloomed,  
Bloomed, burst, and scattered down its deadly  
seed,—  
They swept, and died like freemen on the height,  
Like freemen, and like men of noble breed;  
And when the battle fell away at night  
By hasty and contemptuous hands were thrust

Obscurely in a common grave with him  
The fair-haired keeper of their love and trust.  
Now limb doth mingle with dissolvèd limb  
In nature's busy old democracy  
To flush the mountain laurel when she blows  
Sweet by the southern sea,  
And heart with crumbled heart climbs in the  
rose:—

The untaught hearts with the high heart that  
knew

This mountain fortress for no earthly hold  
Of temporal quarrel, but the bastion old  
Of spiritual wrong,  
Built by an unjust nation sheer and strong,  
Expugnable but by a nation's rue  
And bowing down before that equal shrine  
By all men held divine,  
Whereof his band and he were the most holy  
sign.

The nature of Moody's debt to William James's oration is apparent at once. Such details as he used from it he could easily have remembered over a period of two years. The poetic development of the story is entirely Moody's. The few minor changes he introduced may be attributed to the poet's perception of the need for rearrangement. The Fifty-fourth Massachusetts, for example, did not wait all night and attack at dawn; they waited all day and attacked in the evening. Moody either wished to change the time of the attack to dawn because the breaking day was more harmonious with the new light in the soldiers' faces, or, because after a lapse of two years, William James's "evening twilight" had become "night" in Moody's mind. The "mountain fortress," which is at variance with the topography of Morris Island, simply increases the difficulty of the attack and thus enhances the courage of the soldiers, and it also serves as a symbol of the country's spiritual guilt. The phrase is a natural transition from James's description of "the huge bulk of the fortress looming darkly three-quarters of a mile ahead against the

sky. . . .” The “hasty and contemptuous hands”<sup>30</sup> may just as likely have been Union as Confederate, for both sides helped bury the dead the day after the battle. James made a great deal of this point because it lent itself so well to oratorical flourish, but he also emphasized the common grave as a symbol of the brotherhood of man. In both these details Moody follows James because it suits his purpose. It is important to remember that Moody is not writing history and that he is not merely eulogizing Robert Gould Shaw; he is describing an incident which illustrates, in a time of hesitation, the directness and courage with which the country must act.

For Moody, as for James, Shaw possessed the “inner mystery.” It is the want of this inner light in his fellow-men that aggravates Moody’s moral indigna-

<sup>30</sup> There is no conclusive evidence on the manner of Shaw’s burial. On October 21, 1865, Assistant Surgeon John T. Luck, U.S.A., wrote to the editor of the *Army and Navy Journal*: “Sir,—I was taken prisoner by the Rebels the morning after the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, July 19, 1863. While being conducted into the fort I saw Colonel Shaw, of the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts (colored) Regiment, lying dead upon the ground, just outside the parapet. . . . Brigadier-General Haygood [*sic*], commanding the Rebel forces, said to me: ‘I knew Colonel Shaw before the war, and then esteemed him. Had he been in command of white troops, I should have given him an honorable burial. As it is, I shall bury him in the common trench, with the negroes that fell with him.’

“The burial party were then at work, and no doubt Colonel Shaw was buried just beyond the ditch of the fort, in the trench where I saw our dead indiscriminately thrown. Two days afterwards, a Rebel surgeon (Dr. Dawson of Charleston, South Carolina, I think) told me that Haygood had carried out his threat” (*Harvard Memorial Biographies*, II, 210-11). But, according to Colonel N. P. Hallowell, General Hagood said later that he had “no recollection of the conversation as given by Surgeon Luck, and attempts to show that Colonel Shaw’s burial in the trench with his negroes was without significance” (Hallowell, “The Negro as a Soldier in the War of the Rebellion,” *Civil and Mexican Wars, 1861, 1846* [“Papers of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts”] [Boston, 1913], p. 301).

tion. From the Philippines came stories which indicated that the natives of the islands were suffering at the hands of Americans injustices and even cruelty which were as evil as anything under the Spanish rule. The anti-imperialist societies published many letters written home by American troops who told of not taking prisoners and of the “water-cure.” The indifference with which these stories were received showed in a bad light when contrasted with Shaw’s spirit:

Gazing on him, must I not deem they err  
Whose careless lips in street and shop aver  
As common tidings, deeds to make his cheek  
Flush from the bronze, and his dead throat to  
speak?

What this hardness of conscience meant for the future of the country was a serious concern to some; others were sincerely and bravely optimistic. Three days before the Battle of Manila Bay, Albert J. Beveridge spoke at the Grant anniversary banquet of the Middlesex Club in Boston. Grant, he said, “never forgot that we are a conquering race, and that we must obey our blood and occupy new markets, and, if necessary, new lands.”<sup>31</sup> Beveridge’s ideas were new to his listeners; they were still fighting a war to free Cuba. But Beveridge went on:

American factories are making more than the American people can use; American soil is producing more than they can consume. Fate has written our policy for us; the trade of the world must and shall be ours.<sup>32</sup>

This time the audience cheered. As Beveridge’s biographer puts it, “Many hard-headed business men had been a bit cynical over the sentiment of the war—but this was business.”<sup>33</sup> And Beveridge, a brilliant speaker, won many followers to

<sup>31</sup> Claude G. Bowers, *Beveridge and the Progressive Era* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1932), p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

the imperialist way of thought. It was the blindness of these people that Moody lamented:

Our fluent men of place and consequence  
Fumble and fill their mouths with hollow phrase,  
Or for the end-all of deep arguments  
Intone their dull commercial liturgies—

To Moody this could mean only a renunciation of the principles of democracy. Beveridge said clearly that "the axioms applicable to thirteen impoverished colonies have been rendered obsolete by history." From an economic point of view, Beveridge, of course, was right; but Moody was conscious only of the moral problem. "Was it for this our fathers kept the law?"

Ah no!

We have not fallen so.

We are our fathers' sons: let those who lead us know!

It was not for the economists that eager youths had shed their blood at San Juan.

Moody warns those who lead us not to betray their "pure conquest,"

For manifest in that disastrous light  
We shall discern the right  
And do it, tardily.

If right is to be done, the poet feels, we must reveal again the moral courage of Robert Gould Shaw, we must show that William James's tribute to our forefathers may still be applied to us, that we are men "of a temper not to be finally overcome."

The significance of "An Ode in Time of Hesitation" is likely to increase with the passing of time. Few poems show more plainly the poet's exercise of his art and duty. The poem is a clear example of the poetic process of developing historical fact and current problems into a theme at once timely and permanent. In a time of crisis impassioned utterances are many, poetic utterances are few.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING A LITERARY ORPHAN

CHARLTON LAIRD<sup>1</sup>

In our somewhat snobbish world one needs approved antecedents. Not without a sense of shock, accordingly, does one discover that American literature has no respectable origins.

Now, we know what it is for literature to be born with a proper set of parents—on the right side of the artistic railroad tracks, as it were. We know that in older cultures poetry preceded prose; and we see that this sequence is to be expected, for poetry is the language of the emotions, and emotions are expressed as soon as an infant can squall. Similarly, emotions are powerful in the most primitive

savages. Prose, on the other hand, is the language of the intellect; and the intellect does not become subtle and schooled until a late time—late in the life of the individual and late in the life of the race. Accordingly, if a literature is to display good breeding, it must rest upon an honorable ancestry of assorted poems.

The evidence, furthermore, supports the theory, for primitives produce poetry. The Eskimos battle one another with richly satiric anathema in verse; the Zuni have long poetic compositions adapted to semidramatic recitation; and some African professional bards are said to celebrate great events with impromptu

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odes. Early records, such as the *Shih-King* and the *Vedas*, contain exquisite verse; and the earliest examples of sustained literary performance are epics, the Greek *Iliad*, for example, and the parallel Hindu *Mahabahrata*. Such productions were so numerous that we may mourn the loss of at least six Spanish epics, of which descriptions happen to remain. Early prose, on the other hand, is pathetically bad. One has only to compare the lyrics of the Psalms with the bumbling prose of Genesis, to know that the early Hebrews had a sense of beauty and emotion but not of structure; when good Hebraic prose appears, it is the poetic, lyric prose of the prophets. Even in Egypt, where a prose style was cultivated—having a prose style was something like belonging to the Republican party in Vermont; it was your political trousers, without which you could not go anywhere—even in Egypt, prose postdates poetry and is poetic in its love of emotive ornament. In the Western world, good prose is scarce until after the Renaissance and does not become the dominant literary mode until the eighteenth century—one is tempted to say until the nineteenth, with the growth of journalism and the modern novel.

As poetry, then, by the overwhelming testimony of orthodox cultures everywhere, do literatures come honorably into the world. Not so, our literature. In the United States there is no good early verse, and the indigenous American tradition has grown best in prose. Without doing much violence to truth, one might say that the first two centuries of American culture produced no poem that now merits repetition; and, although one may admire an occasional Anne Bradstreet, one cannot find, in the slender sheaf of verse which Americanophile critics could call "competent,"

evidence of a native American literary growth, rooted in American life and thriving in its own way, after the American temper. The best of the verse, like the worst of it, is imitative and servile. For seventeenth- and eighteenth-century American prose, on the other hand, one can say something more. In the first place, it is more plentiful and more capable, and the best of it shows more native root. Cotton Mather's prose has more power and rhythm than Michael Wigglesworth's verse; the clear good sense of *Poor Richard* puts to shame *The Culprit Fay*, pixy-led and as false-American as the skylark with which it closes. So with Samuel Sewall, William Byrd, Jonathan Edwards, and a number more; much might be said for them. They are not indigenous, of course; but, if their roots are foreign, if the types of writing to which they turn naturally are imported, if the pattern of their reaction is traditional, their inspiration is genuine, and it has become acclimatized. Few readers of Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God" can believe that the sermon was a conscious imitation of an English sermon. Edwards cries:

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

These wicked folk were no hypothetical sinners, imitated from somewhat hazy English sinners, spun out of the sermon-born sinners in the Reverend So-and-So's *Collected Works*. They were flesh-and-blood, skirt-and-pants-wearing Massachusetts Bay Colony sinners, and the Angry God was the god of the Massachusetts Bay theocracy.



In short, there is no early literature produced by white men on this continent which can be called genuinely native and American. Such as it is, the prose is the best of it; it is the more interesting, and it is certainly nearer to being indigenous.

With the nineteenth century, not much change need be noted. True, all writing becomes more plentiful and more capable; but the verse scarcely outstrips the prose in capacity, and certainly not in originality. The schoolboy would not agree; having learned pieces like "The Village Blacksmith," "The Raven," and "Thanatopsis" when he was too young to do more than protest, he accepts Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Bryant, Emerson, and Poe as literary giants, and he thinks of them as poets. The contemporaries of these gentlemen saw them differently. Even Poe, whom popular fancy pictures as a wraithlike individual, suspended somewhere between Nirvana and inebriety and twittering strange music in a never-never land, was mostly concerned with prose. He was a practical journalist, interested in the problems of his day; he was also a philosophic critic, of whom it can be authoritatively said: "He clearly foreshadowed, if he did not originate, the entire corpus of modern aesthetic theory."

Nor was Poe the only poet who practiced prose. The solid achievement through half a century of Bryant the editor surpasses the occasional triumphs of Bryant the poet prodigy. Whittier may have been a poet; some students think he was. He says of himself that he,

.... with a mission to fulfil,  
Had left the Muses' haunt to turn  
The crank of an opinion-mill. ....

In that hegira he forsook the false gods of prettified poetry, who led so many of his contemporaries astray. But, having forsaken the old gods, he found no new

ones; having left the imitative poetic traditions, he found no native tradition. Even so, the verse of this somewhat prosaic person has strength that one misses in Lowell, a condition which may account for the preference of some critics who like the prose of *My Study Windows* better than the verse of *The Vision of Sir Launfal*. A champion of Lowell, pressed to defend his favorite, is likely to turn to the *Biglow Papers*, and we may as well turn there too. Almost any of the papers would do, but the following is from Number Five, in which Lowell describes a Senate fight over slavery:

"It's 'coz they're so happy, thet, wen crazy sarpints  
Stick their nose in our bizness, we git so darned riled;  
We think it's our dooty to give pooty sharp hints,  
Thet the last crumb of Edin on airth shan't be spiled,"

Sez John C. Calhoun, sez he;—

"Ah," sez Dixon H. Lewis,

"It perfectly true is

Thet slavery's airth's grettest boon," sez he.

Now this is keen satire, particularly when one notices that the arguments of the proslavery party are reduced to nursery jingles, but it cannot be called poetry in any sense except that the lines rhyme and have a strong and bumpy rhythm. Its form is the form of poetry, but its strength is the strength of prose. To sense this, we have only to turn to the prose which accompanies the verse, and read a passage like the following:

In God's name, let all, who hear nearer and nearer the hungry moan of the storm and the growl of the breakers, speak out! But, alas, we have no right to interfere. If a man pluck an apple of mine, he shall be in danger of the justice; but if he steal my brother, I must be silent. Who says this? Our Constitution, consecrated by the callous consuetude of sixty years, and grasped in triumphant argument by the left hand of him whose right hand clutches the clotted slave-whip.

It is somewhat bombastic, perhaps, but it has strength, and it moves with the ease of a skilled man working.

As for Longfellow, he himself would have been the first to admit that he was neither a great poet nor the leader of a distinctively American poetic school. He was, after all, the occupant of America's most distinguished chair of what would now be called "comparative literature." He was a widely traveled, modest, scholarly gentleman, who was probably pleased but was certainly embarrassed by the fulsome praise of his countrymen. Most of his poems are mundane in thought, sentimental in emotion, and monotonous in form. We have paid him the compliment, patriotic if not very discerning, of committing to memory his worst verse while ignoring his sonnets; but he is scarcely a great poet, and he is certainly not an original one. His most individual piece, *Hiawatha*, is composed of matter sentimentalized from Schoolcraft's journals, with characters and rhythm imported from the Finnish *Kalevala*; the result is what a Chinese friend of mine would have called "a nice piece of poem," but it is no more native American (either white or red) than MacPherson's *Ossian* is native Irish or *Lalla Rookh* is native Hindu. It is merely pallidly romantic, perhaps falsely romantic.

Of the schoolboy immortals, we have yet to speak of Emerson, in whom many have found more truth than poetry. The heart of Emerson, I suppose, is in his *Journals*; others have remarked that, when Emerson wished to write an essay, he skimmed the cream from the journals and that, when he wanted to write a poem, he churned it. One might add that when the churning was done he did not always separate the butter from the buttermilk. One has only to read Emerson to know that he thought

and felt in prose and that a poem was an exercise for him. Even if we accept Alfred Noyes's rather startling tribute to Emerson as America's greatest poet, "a far subtler musician in verse than Poe," in whom can be heard some harbingers of modern verse, it must be admitted that Emerson's verse was varied and often halting, while he wrote prose like one to the manner born—whether the reader does or does not like the manner.

So much for the men of the mid-nineteenth century in America who are sometimes thought of as poets; neither very original nor very American, they do their more indigenous work, and often their best work, in prose. The situation is quite otherwise when we turn to the men who are known primarily as prose writers: Irving, Parkman, Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Melville. They wrote no verse, or, if they did, wrote it patchily and badly. No admirer of Thoreau's rich, homely prose would want him known for his pallid and imitative verse. Irving, in his *Knickerbocker's History*, wrote at least one book which grew out of his native New York City, with its polyglot mixture of culture and Dutchmen. Parkman's historical prose carried Parkman's stamp. And so through the list of prose writers. As we gain perspective on the nineteenth century in America, more and more critics are coming to feel that the best writing was done, not in "The Rhodora" and in "Ulalume—A Ballad," but in the death of Judge Pyncheon, and in the cadenced prose of *Moby Dick*.

As the nineteenth century matures and the twentieth century opens, there are significant changes in American literature. The linotype and the rotary press dump tons of reading matter upon the public, who dutifully endeavor to read

all this matter. Free popular education becomes generally effective; it broadens tremendously the reading public and thus provides an audience that is anything but belletristic in its taste. The Puritan prejudice against novel-reading breaks down, and the reading of novels becomes a sort of national amusement, like baseball and picnics. A native prose theater finds an audience. Thus Americans become a prose-writing and a prose-reading people. To a degree they had always been so; and thus the late-nineteenth-century emphasis upon prose is but an extension of the early-nineteenth-century tendency to prose—in short, just what one would expect. Accordingly, it is striking indeed, at just this time when prose promises to come into its own, that there begins in America something of a tradition of native American poetry.

We cannot question, I suppose, that the first two literary Americans who turned naturally to poetry, who produced consistently important work in verse, and who were indigenously and recognizably American, were Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman. Superficially they are not similar. A critic would have no great difficulty, however, in showing that they had some common roots, and I fancy one could associate their qualities with strains in the national character. We might differ about their qualities and about our national temper; but that these people had character and that their character is reflected in modern verse can scarcely be denied. I am not suggesting, of course, that these two poets discovered a new way of writing; that it fitted the American temperament, was imitated, and became the American poetic way. We should not oversimplify a complex situation. For instance, we have been told that Stephen Crane read

Emily Dickinson and wrote *The Black Riders*; that Harriet Monroe read *The Black Riders* and wrote *The New Poetry*; that, meanwhile, Whitman impressed the French imagists and Amy Lowell's friends reimposed the French. Obviously, whatever happened was not so simple as this, but quite clearly something did happen.

With the turn of the century, a whole flock of new poets were coming on. Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg thought that poetry was a way in which an American could talk to other Americans; to get their talking done they invented their own ways of doing it—ways that savored of the men and of America itself. Edwin Arlington Robinson and Robert Frost had each a sense of reality and a sense of humor. As men they were very different, but as poets they had this in common: what they said, and their manners of saying it, had not been borrowed from anybody. They were recognizably individual and American. T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and Gertrude Stein (to choose extreme examples) were American, too, even if they borrowed from Europe, even when they themselves fled to Europe. They were no more imitative-European when they crossed the Atlantic than Byron and Keats were imitative-Italian when they fled to the Mediterranean. They were not mimicking another culture. They took what appealed to them where they could find it, and built upon it in their own way. As artists they were independent, whatever their preferences. Together, these early twentieth-century poets, even the expatriates, were indigenous and American as no previous group of poets had been; and their artistic descendants, if relatively few and somewhat neglected, live after them.

If, then, I have correctly interpreted

the evidence, we have these curious facts: in most cultures, poetry appears early and gradually gives way to prose as the culture matures; in North America, early writing inclines to prose, and good indigenous poetry appears only when the older prose tradition seems to be coming to full flower. That is, the sequence of poetry and prose is reversed. How shall we account for this anomaly, and is it significant, or merely curious?

The most apparent explanation, I suppose, is that you have in America a reflection, somewhat tardy and usually distorted, of what happened in Europe, particularly of what happened in England and in the northwestern Continental countries. Thus, the seventeenth-century religious pamphleteering of the Puritans in England finds its echo in the religious pamphleteering of the Puritans in America; Cotton Mather and Roger Williams were doing only moderately well what John Milton and John Bunyan were doing supremely well. That there was little Puritan verse in America need not surprise us, perhaps, since there was little Puritan verse in England either; the Puritans did not much approve of verse, as verse, however much they approved of it as hymns. Similarly, the eighteenth century in England inclined to be a century of prose; one would expect it to be a century of prose in America as well, as we have seen it was. The nineteenth century ushered in the familiar school of American poetry with Bryant, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, Poe, and Emerson. These men, however, are the American version of romanticism, which also in Europe was inclined to poetry; Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats are certainly a more admired group than are Hazlitt, Lamb, and De Quincey. As the century develops, one could find parallels to the Vic-

torians and to the Pre-Raphaelites; but one notices, also, a growing independence and self-assurance; Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, and Henry Adams, among others, seem to be transitional figures. In the twentieth century we see American literature standing on its own feet, going its own way easily and naturally. It borrows, but it borrows without servility; it acknowledges no sense of debt, for it believes that it has a substantial capital from which to lend. Even though many Americans feel an artistic and social servility in the presence of older cultures which suggests the humility of an American buyer in a pre-war Parisian dress shop, we no longer rely primarily upon Europe in literature, nor do we accept in faith and innocence all that we are sent. In short, our literature has outgrown its colonial state of mind—or at least has partially outgrown it.

This is the superficial, the obvious, explanation. One doubts that it is the true or the entire explanation. One wonders what lies beneath these apparent comparisons, obscured by them. Even if we admit that the Puritans did not import much poetry into America because the Puritans did not practice much poetry in England, we still must face the fact that indigenous poetry did not grow here, as indigenous poetry did grow in other surroundings. And here we are brought face to face with what is probably the salient fact about America and American nations: culture did not grow here at all. At least, in the sense that it grew in the Mediterranean area, in China, in Mayan Mexico, it did not grow among the American colonies. It did not sprout among crude and half-savage people, burgeon in its own way, and bring forth fruit after its own kind. Culture in America was an exotic, brought into a land that was already culturing a growth



of a quite different sort. Or, to change the figure, culture never had a childhood in America but was adopted as an adult; it was acclimated, but it had no real roots in the soil. Thus, one might assume that the early Americans developed no native American poetry because they had no deep emotions rooted in America. They lacked those long generations in which native feelings could thrive. Scarcely was one set of ideas and attitudes settling down in America, preparing for a natural growth that might eventually have blossomed into something indigenous, when a whole new crop of ideas and attitudes was imported from Europe to the colonial Americans, who now had to busy themselves becoming up-to-date Europeans. Thus, one might assume that the reversal of the roles of poetry and prose in America is but one more evidence of the effects of a phenomenon which is apparently quite new in the world and of which we have only begun to assay the effects.

Never before, so far as we know, has a great people arisen within two or three centuries, its population mainly composed of highly cultured people dumped into a wilderness where they had neither models nor cultural roots. We have seen a small body of Aryans subjugate and rule a vast mixture of Dravidians, Bengali, and Negritos in the Indian Peninsula; we have seen some half-savage Germans half-enslave and half-drive out other half-savage Celts on the island of Britain. We have seen various mixtures of people and cultures; we have seen partially colonial cities like Carthage and Alexandria; but not before modern times, notably in North and South America and in Australia, have we seen great nations grow up almost completely without native roots. If there have been other colonial cultures, we know little of them;

if the speakers of Indo-European who left cities buried beneath the western Gobi Desert were a colonial people, we cannot learn from them. Their literature is lost. Thus, since in its origin and growth the American society differs from the other cultures we know, quite possibly we should expect the growth of the arts in America to follow patterns which differ radically from those which we establish on the basis of more settled cultures.

Naturally, no one can say. One could make other suggestions. One could say, for instance, that poetry is not very congenial to Americans, whose genius is for science and business. One might assume that a combination of uncongenial circumstances—Puritan hostility to ornament, the hard life of the frontier, the effects of mass production upon commerce and industry, the accident of American colonization occurring during a period of the ascendancy of prose—have so depressed poetry in this country that it had to await the full flowering of American literary expression before it could raise its feeble voice at all. One might say these things, but one may well find them inadequate; one certainly finds them leading back to that central fact about America and American culture, that they never had a natural growth from a relatively primitive people.

For, if we cannot know why prose precedes poetry in America, we have, at least, latitude for speculation. One may postulate, with a modest show of conviction, that American literature differs from the older literatures because Americans are the first of the completely colonial peoples of whom we have extensive records. According to this theory, then, America's literary origins seem anomalous only because America is the first example of a new phenomenon—a society

that never had a tap root. That is, one would have to assume that there are at least two kinds of societies—those that grow naturally in a given place from whatever barbarians take final root there, and societies that grow on a given spot in defiance of the local barbarians, from people who have been imported from other cultured areas. Of the first sort of culture, we have many examples; they are all over Europe and they have appeared on most of the other continents. But of a completely colonial people, there was no conspicuous example until recently; and of the potential colonial peoples, only the United States is old enough, large enough, and settled enough to serve as an example. If this be a sound hypothesis, then American literature differs from others not because it is unorthodox

as literature but because it is, as yet, unique. It is unlike the other literatures we know, because it belongs to a different class. It is the first literary orphan. When compared with the literature rooted in an ancestry stretching back to barbarism, it seems to flout the accepted conventions. But by these conventions it cannot be judged. It can be judged only by its own conventions. What its conventions are, we may know better when we have more colonial literatures with which to compare it. When Australia, Mexico, Bolivia, and the Argentine have developed, perhaps we shall understand. Meanwhile, if we are to treat American literature sympathetically, we should remember that it is unique, that by older notions the poor thing never had a proper "fetchin' up."

### ENGLISH STRESS ACCENT

EDWIN B. DAVIS<sup>1</sup>

The pronunciation of English by educated Americans is unstable, more so, it would seem, than the pronunciation of their vernacular by similar social groups in England, France, Germany, Italy, or Russia. When the cultured President of this country broadcasts a pronunciation that the Standard—which, of all English dictionaries, gives the most extensive treatment of pronunciation—does not even mention, we are inclined to infer one or both of two things: that the dictionary data on pronunciation are inaccurate or that the present means of indicating and teaching pronunciation in the schools are inadequate.

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The word referred to is *decade*, which was pronounced like "decayed." The earlier Websters stress the first syllable. Not until 1934 was a second choice—indicated as "esp. Brit."—given with the stress on the second syllable.

In irregularity of stress the vernacular of only one of the countries previously mentioned can compete with English, viz., the Russian. The great difficulty of teaching any rules for the pronunciation of English is that exceptions are sometimes even more numerous than regularities. This lack of co-ordination leaves the graduates of our schools a broad latitude in their approach to new or less familiar words.

My attention was recently drawn to

this by some test lists sent out by a certain "Doctor of Letters" who offers to teach you correct English in fifteen lessons. On finding my own pronunciations diverging from his in several of the words given as one of the tests, I asked myself why I, a teacher of languages for five decades, should be so ignorant of dictionary standards.

In England the more conservative and concentrated character of the system of education takes care of this better than here. Aside from this difference, one cause is surely the inadequacy of the spelling of so many words to indicate either the sounds or the accentuation.

The list I have in mind concerns the accent in the following twenty words: *absolutely, address, exquisite, robust, autopsy, grimace, unfrequented, dirigible, aspirant, quintuplets, conversant, positively, ordinarily, vagary, comparable, vehement, condolence, formidable, museum, precedence.*

It occurred to me in this connection to examine the bases of dictionary orthoëpy. The early English dictionaries of pronunciation gave the personal preferences of the compilers, each of whom claimed that his pronunciations were those of the most highly cultured people of London. Passing to American dictionaries, I found an edition of Webster published earlier in the century which stated that the highest authorities had been consulted and which guaranteed that its pronunciations were those used by the educated people of the English-speaking world. Later editors realized that these claims were indefensible, and we now read that they "cannot yet hope to fix upon a standard of pronunciation that will be universally accepted."

The Standard Dictionary sent out a long list of words to twenty-five "scholars and professors of English in all the

great centers of English civilization" and indicates both in the early and the recent 1938 edition not only the pronunciations of other dictionaries but also the individual preferences of these scholars.

But the editors of both dictionaries recognize that the opinion of specialists in some particular fields of philology or science does not necessarily represent the bulk of the less illiterate elements of the English-speaking world. This is made clear by the following in the latest Webster: "The standard of English pronunciation, . . . in so far as a standard may be said to exist, is the usage that now prevails among the educated and cultured people to whom the language is vernacular . . ." and in the latest Standard: "Language in every phase of it is ultimately a matter of conventional usage, and there is no court of higher appeal."

So, then, it is the function of a dictionary to determine and record this conventional usage. To what extent do our dictionaries perform this task?

A university group that contains members from all over the United States and covers a large number of academic fields seems to constitute fairly well a national cross-section of educated Americans, and possibly a better criterion of modern pronunciation than dictionaries based upon tradition and the decision of philological experts.

Questionnaires were therefore sent to Americans exclusively in certain categories of the Rutgers University faculties, comprising the president and deans and the professors in the less technical fields. There were 137 replies. The academic categories are as shown in Table 1, arranged in diminishing numerical order.

The geographical distribution by

states and Canadian provinces of these people is as shown in Table 2, arranged in alphabetical order, with a few other localities appended. Column (1) is for

ern" the southern Atlantic and Gulf states, excluding Texas, and under "General American" the rest of the United States. So dividing, we have the results given in Table 3 for secondary schools and for colleges.

TABLE 1

English, speech, journalism, bibliography.....	35
Natural sciences.....	17
History, political science, law....	14
Economics, sociology.....	12
Foreign languages.....	11
Administration.....	10
Education.....	10
Art, music.....	8
Psychology.....	8
Mathematics.....	8
Religion, philosophy.....	4
Total.....	137

Kenyon quotes the distribution of these three American speech groups, on an estimate made in 1927, as consisting of eleven, twenty-six, and ninety million people, respectively.<sup>2</sup> While it is not certain that the classification of the author and that of Professor Kenyon correspond accurately, it is clear that Northeastern American is represented disproportionately more than the others. However, the questionnaire concerns simply the place of stress. This seemed

TABLE 2

	(1)	(2)		(1)	(2)
California.....	2	3	North Dakota.....	1	1
Colorado.....	1	1	Ohio.....	9	11
Connecticut.....	2	7	Ontario.....	3	3
Delaware.....	1	1	Pennsylvania.....	22	13
District of Columbia.....	1	0	Quebec.....	1	1
Illinois.....	5	5	Rhode Island.....	1	2
Indiana.....	2	0	South Carolina.....	1	0
Iowa.....	2	1	Tennessee.....	2	1
Maine.....	3	3	Texas.....	1	1
Maryland.....	2	3	Vermont.....	1	1
Massachusetts.....	16	14	Virginia.....	2	3
Michigan.....	1	3	Washington.....	1	1
Minnesota.....	1	1	West Virginia.....	2	2
Missouri.....	1	2	Wisconsin.....	3	3
New Hampshire.....	2	6	<i>Addenda:</i>		
New Jersey.....	14	20	Switzerland.....	1	0
New York.....	26	20	Wales.....	1	0
North Carolina.....	3	3	No Degree.....	0	1

secondary school and column (2) for college. It appears that English-speaking America is widely represented in this group.

A common practice is to classify American pronunciation into these groups—Northeastern, Southeastern, and General American. Under "Northeastern" have been placed New York, New England, and eastern Canada; under "Southeast-

ern" the southern Atlantic and Gulf states, excluding Texas, and under "General American" the rest of the United States. So dividing, we have the results given in Table 3 for secondary schools and for colleges.

Each person addressed was requested to indicate his preference, not his practice, since the act of speech becomes so intuitive that people find it difficult to state with certainty which they generally

<sup>2</sup> John Samuel Kenyon, *American Pronunciation* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1940), p. 14.



use of two more familiar pronunciations—in fact, it may be one that they heartily disapprove, as the author has had occasion to observe.

TABLE 3

	(1)	(2)
Northeastern.....	55	57
Southeastern.....	9	9
General American.....	64	66
Total.....	134	131

approved or less approved form, column (3), the number of individuals, expressed in round percentages, of the total 137 who prefer the dictionary favorite; column (4), the percentage of those who prefer the unapproved or less approved form; column (5), the percentage of those who for one reason or another indicate both pronunciations; and column (6), the percentage of those who express no opinion.

For 6 out of these 20 words, 50 per

TABLE 4

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
ab'solutely.....	absolute <sup>1</sup> ly <sup>3</sup>	39	56	4	1
address <sup>4</sup> .....	ad'dress <sup>5</sup>	62	23	14	1
ex'quisite.....	exquis'ite <sup>3</sup>	78	20	1	1
robust <sup>7</sup> .....	ro'bust	56	41	2	1
au'topsy.....	autop'sy <sup>6</sup>	73	24	1	2
grimace <sup>7</sup> .....	grim'ace	31	62	3	4
unfrequent'ed.....	unfre'quented <sup>7</sup>	34	64	1	1
dir'igible.....	dirig'ible	80	19	0	1
aspi'rant.....	as'pirant <sup>8</sup>	42	56	0	2
quin'tuplets.....	quintup'lets	45	55	0	1
con'versant.....	conver'sant <sup>4</sup>	30	70	0	0
pos'itively.....	positive'ly	81	15	3	1
or'dinarily.....	ordinar'ily <sup>9</sup>	20	77	1	1
vaga'ry.....	va'gary <sup>6</sup>	46	50	1	3
com'parable.....	compar'able	92	2	0	0
ve'he'ment.....	vehe'ment	94	6	0	0
condo'lence.....	con'dolence	61	37	0	1
for'midable.....	formid'able	93	7	0	0
muse'um.....	mu'seum	82	17	1	0
prece'dence.....	prec'edence <sup>6</sup>	44	54	1	1

<sup>1</sup> Webster, second choice, emphatic.

<sup>4</sup> Webster, noun, first choice; verb, only choice.

<sup>5</sup> Webster, noun, second choice.

<sup>6</sup> Oxford, second choice.

<sup>7</sup> Standard, only choice.

<sup>8</sup> Webster, second choice.

<sup>9</sup> Webster, first choice.

In view of my own personal idiosyncrasies, I thought I might find among my colleagues some deviations from dictionary standards. My worst fears and maximum expectations were surpassed.

The latest editions of the three best-known English dictionaries are here represented, namely, Webster, the Standard, and the Oxford. In Table 4, column (1) gives the pronunciation indicated by these dictionaries; column (2), the un-

cent or over of this group of educated Americans prefer pronunciations not approved or less approved by all three of these foremost authorities and for 3 other words by two of the three dictionaries. The most striking instance is "or'dinarily" with only 20 per cent favoring this pronunciation—the only one accepted by two of those dictionaries—and 77 per cent rejecting it. Then comes "con'versant" with 30 per cent for this more fa-

vored form and 70 per cent opposed, and then "grimace" with 31 per cent for and 62 per cent against this form—the only one given by all three dictionaries.

In 6 of the 9 words which show a preponderance of unapproved or less approved pronunciations, the shift of stress has been to the penult in the one disyllable and to the antepenult in the five other polysyllables, viz., *grim'ace*, *unfre'quented*, *as'pirant*, *ordina'rily*, *va'gary*, *prec'edence*. For the exception—*absolute'ly*—the change is regarded as induced by emphatic stress, and it is a fact, apparently pertinent, in case of the other two exceptions—*quintup'lets* and *conver'sant*—that they have exceptionally complex combinations of consonants inclosing the least vowel, viz., *pl-ts* and *rs-nt*, which find support in adjacent stress.

One thing seems clear, especially apropos of new technical terms, namely, a proparoxytone tendency that defies derivation. The dictionaries, for instance, first gave the only possible logical pronunciations, *vitam'ines* and *sul'fanil-am'ide*, both compounded of two distinct words. Those who first applied these new forms could not fail to be familiar with the chemical terms *am'ine* and *am'ide* from which their second element came, but the public, professional and lay, fashioned them to suit its own taste into *vi'tamins* and *sulfanil'amide*. So, too, *penicillin*, derived from *penicil'lium*, the name of the mold from which it is made, cannot be otherwise than *penicil'lin*; but one hears some teachers—and, of course, their students—calling it *penic'illin*. Will, here, too, the antepenult win out?

The fact is that most teachers and students, especially of the sciences, most doctors and pharmacists—and these start the ball a-rolling—are not linguists and, when they come to the printed word, adopt a more or less intuitive stress.

I venture to draw one inference: that there is urgent need for much more extensive investigation of the preferences, and incidentally of the practices, of educated people in the field of pronunciation. Certain phases, it is true, have already been carefully studied. J. S. Kenyon has in the Introduction to the latest editions of Webster an admirable treatise on the variations in stress accent due to rhythm, contrast, intensity, morphology. Many regional sound variations have been studied and described. There are dialect societies that make a specialty of this. It is in the broader field of basic differences that the lacuna yawns. There must be a much wider inquiry than has ever yet been made, an arithmetical count to determine the practice and choice of numerical majorities and larger minorities of educated people. The most profound knowledge of derivation and phonetics cannot dispense with this.

I should propose as a part of such plan that lists of words be sent to the appropriate faculties of the more important colleges and universities in the different parts of the United States and Canada for indications of preferences in pronunciation and other pertinent data. It would take a long time to collect and collate such material; and, as pronunciations are in constant flux, the work would have to be repeated at certain intervals, but it could and should be done.

This is all tied up with English spelling into a Gordian knot that will have to be cut sometime. Thanks largely to the efforts of the late Chinese ambassador to the United States, Hu Shih, a new, more or less phonetic, alphabet is now replacing the traditional ideographs, which bear no relation to the sound, in China. In Turkey the substitution of the Latin alphabet for the Arabic

script was the last reform accomplished under the dictatorship of Mustafa Kemal. The need of a better medium of communication as a means of fortifying national and linguistic unity begot and developed these reforms, but it took foreign war and invasion to create an effective realization of this need.

A similar change is likely to emerge in France in the train of German occupation. There are indications that point to this.

War stirs men up, activates their initiative, produces reforms. Perhaps English will not have to wait in America, with its lighter burden of tradition, for foreign invasion; but, thus or otherwise, the change will surely come to pass if "truth in the inner parts" is kept alive.

A simple device to develop stress-consciousness would be to print in all school texts and readers, as is done in dictionaries, the familiar accent mark after the stressed syllable. As the first syllable is the one generally stressed, it would be necessary to do this only for words not stressed on the first syllable.

For the dictionary favorites of our list this would apply to: *address'*, *robust'*, *grimace'*, *unfrequen'ted*, *aspi'rant*, *vaga'ry*, *condo'lence*, *muse'um*, *prece'dence*. For

the deviations, this would apply only to: *absolute'ly*, *unfre'quented*, *quintup'lets*, *conver'sant*, *ordinar'ily*. The vast majority of English words would need no accent marks. In the more familiar forms of the Lord's Prayer, for example, only six words would need accents, viz., *forgive'*, *against'*, *tempta'tion*, *deliv'er*, *for-ev'er*, *amen'*.

The Ford-model McGuffey readers, from second to fourth, are satisfactorily marked both for vowel quality and stress. The vocabulary here is largely composed of more familiar words than those we have been discussing. Of the first 100 polysyllables in the vocabularies of the fourth reader, only 29 require indication of stressed syllable. And polysyllables, after all, are only a small part of the average non-scientific text. For example, the last story in this fourth reader contains 704 words, only 29 of which are polysyllables unstressed on the first syllable, i.e., about 4 per cent.

So the problem of stress is not a major one—indeed, it is only a small factor in the total one of spelling and articulation. However, the device proposed would at least be a respectable addition to the implements of education.

## THE VALUE OF WRITING PHILOSOPHIES OF LIFE IN FRESHMAN ENGLISH CLASSES

J. D. BAKER<sup>1</sup>

### I

For the last five years the author has experimented with having students write their own philosophies of life. The work evolved from a desire to improve his freshman composition course and to give students some specific help which they

badly need in developing basic standards of value. Student interest and achievement have convinced the writer that the freshman English course provides an excellent opportunity for helping students to begin a critical analysis of their own philosophy of life.

Colleges are responsible for guiding

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the student at one of the most critical periods of his development, yet too often they offer him little or no assistance in some of the areas that are bothering him most: religion, sex, morals, choice of a vocation, etc. The vast majority of students are given no help in systematically and intelligently crystallizing their own philosophies of life. Philosophy courses are offered which theoretically deal with problems of value, but most of them tend to be merely technical, pedantic summaries of philosophic systems of thought. Little, if any, effort is made to link these with the students' own personal lives. There are a few stimulating vital courses, but they reach only a small number of students. Because they lack guidance, most students do no organized reading or thinking about some of their most significant problems. Thus, in most cases, the college fails the student in a field where his need is the greatest.

The writer has attempted to provide some guidance through his freshman English course. Though the major part of the course follows the widely used plan of giving much attention to the reading of essays with some work in biography and fiction, considerable indirect emphasis can be given to philosophic questions. Much of the reading of the year contributes directly or indirectly to students' attitudes, interests, and values in several important fields. The essays studied deal with education, culture, the individual's relations to society, and with sociological, technological, and scientific problems. In the second semester the students write a long autobiography in which they attempt to analyze forces that have influenced their development. Then the last month of the course is devoted entirely to reading about and discussing some of the problems involved in a philosophy of life.

The emphasis of this study is upon the things and experiences one wants from his life, upon his goals, and not upon high-order abstractions and abstruse philosophical ideas. An effort is made to convince the student that he needs a blueprint for his life and to help him analyze aspects of the total picture which he may have missed, not to convert him to any preconceived philosophy of the instructor. Most of the reading for the unit is determined by the student's own interest. His selections are chosen from a long, annotated list of essays and books.

The reading and discussions are centered around eight subjects: religion; religion and science; morals; work; leisure and recreation; beauty and culture; marriage, home, and family; and major goals. The students are given lists of about three hundred questions covering some of the main problems in each of these fields, such as the following:

How adequate is a social philosophy which is based solely upon a belief in man's potentialities?

To what extent is our present-day confusion in moral codes a result of our lack of definite standards of values?

How much of your recreation is mere vicarious enjoyment of someone else's exercise, creation, or self-expression?

Do you actually *see* the things around you: shades of color; the contrast of lights and shadows; the qualities of light; the beauty of line, masses, and shapes; balance and proportion; beauty in movement; qualities of surfaces?

To what extent are your expectations of marriage colored by romantic, sentimental, and they-lived-happily-ever-after, perpetual-honeymoon ideas?

These are used as a starting-point for the students' reading and thinking and as a basis for class discussions.

During the month given to the unit, all class hours are devoted to the analysis of problems which have interested the students. Part of the time is given to



panel discussions conducted by the students, the remainder to discussions led by the instructor. The study is completed with the writing of a philosophy of life.

## II

Class discussions and the written papers have shown quite clearly that the work has a definite value. Some of the most interesting evidence has come from unsigned criticisms of the course which the students are asked to write at the end of each year. One student wrote: "This work on philosophy really started me to thinking quite deeply and helped me to formulate my ideas on subjects to which I had given little thought previously." The evidence indicates not only that the students integrate their thinking on many basic problems but also that the reading and class discussions help them to find answers to questions that are perplexing many of them deeply. This result is shown by such student comments as: "When I was first told that I had to write a philosophy I was 'scared stiff'; but as I got farther and farther into it, I realized that it was helping me to straighten out many questions that had been troubling me for a long time. Because of the conclusions evolved in the study of my own philosophy, I have found a very definite peace of mind." Students who have been baffled by their first thorough study of science and evolution come to see that it is not necessary to reject either all religion or all science but that the two are not basically contradictory. One student commented: "Geology showed me the proof of evolution, but it was in English class that I learned that I could believe it." Some who cannot believe in religion discover that one need not choose between a blind acceptance of theological dogmas or an

eat-drink-and-be-merry hedonistic attitude toward life. The intellectual idealism of thinkers like Bertrand Russell or Irwin Edman offers a constructive challenge to many like the young man who wrote: "I am glad to realize that other men take the same attitude toward religion that I do. I was formerly a little afraid of my idea, but I am not afraid of it when I find that I am not the only one who believes in these unconventional ideas."

Even in cases where students remain in a state of uncertainty, the work seems to have been definitely beneficial, as it was with the student who said: "I found the study valuable in that I am determined to read more philosophies this summer in the hope that I can discover my own."

Another beneficial result of the work is that it helps students to develop tolerance for other people and other points of view. A most encouraging example of this effect is shown by a student who confessed: "I dislike one race of people—the Jewish race. I once hated them. I don't like to see them prosper in business, although they take a lot of kicking around just to make a few dollars. I once swore that if there ever were a campaign against the Jews, I would enter into it heartily. But what did I say at the beginning of this paper? I said that I did not want people to disturb my happiness or interfere with my business. Therefore I am never going to bother the Jews, even though I have an opportunity to do so. I want to be tolerant of other people just as I want them to be tolerant of me."

A study of many points of view also helps students to understand better the world in which they must live. Especially is this fact true of those who come from rather protected or strictly conventional backgrounds.

Each year from 70 to 80 per cent of the students have classified the study of philosophy as the most interesting or valuable part of the course. This attitude is reflected by such comments as the following: "The part of the course I liked best was the study of philosophy. I know that I shall never forget the things I read. Forming a philosophy of my own will be invaluable to me for the rest of my life." "I think the philosophy unit was the best part of the course. I am sure that it will last longer and produce more creative thinking than any other part of the work."

### III

There are two problems involved here. The first concerns the student's need for guidance in developing a philosophy or broad plan for his life. The second and more controversial raises the question as to how this assistance should be given. One might grant the value of the work outlined above, yet insist that it should be given by the philosophy department. However, the writer sees four reasons for this combination of English and philosophy.

First, there is the significant point that freshman composition is usually the only course which reaches all students. Since the work attempts to stimulate and direct students' thinking about some of the most basic problems of their lives, should it not be given to all students?

Second, the work helps to solve two of the major difficulties of all English departments. One of the big problems of any instructor of composition is to select worth-while and interesting material that can be used to develop the student's ability to understand and evaluate what he reads. An even more difficult task is to find theme subjects which provide true writing situations, in which one

writes partly because he has something to say. Anyone who has participated in student "bull" sessions on religion, morals, or marriage knows that most students are deeply concerned over such philosophical questions. They welcome a chance to discuss them frankly. The discussions stimulate an interest in reading the ideas of others, and it is relatively easy for students to write on the subjects because they have ideas to explain and defend. The work provides well-motivated reading and writing.

The reading follows quite closely the general fields covered in some of the best and most widely used collections of freshman readings. It merely goes one step further and requires the student to co-ordinate the reading in these fields, to carry through his evaluations to the final point of crystallizing his own thinking and standard of values in these areas.

The third advantage is that the study provides excellent practice in oral expression. Class discussions during this unit are the most enthusiastic and stimulating of the year. All the questions are highly controversial, and they bring out eager defenses of conflicting points of view. The situation demands clear and effective expression, for students are exacting critics of one another's reasoning. They demand sound arguments to support ideas and refuse to accept prejudice and wishful thinking as a substitute for evidence.

In the final analysis, one of the important tests of any work in a composition course should be the kind of writing the work produces. On this fourth score the work also clearly justifies itself. For five years the philosophy papers have produced some of the best writing done in freshman composition. Not only do they give sincere expressions of personal points of view, but they are written with

more individual style and more effective expression than any other papers of the year.

Naturally these philosophies are tentative. The students are encouraged to consider them as such. A definite effort is made to emphasize the point that one's plan for one's life should never be static. Some papers reflect naïve insight and adolescent values. But for all their faults they are inspiring in their sincerity and potentialities.

The experiment has proved the value of the work. For one month of the year, at least, the English classes have a "punch." This added zest reflects both a keen interest in the subject and greater achievement than in the remainder of the course. Students who narrowly skim the C— margin during the rest of the year frequently produce good work in this

unit. From a purely departmental standpoint the work provides the most effective reading and writing situations of the year. And, most significant of all, this brief introduction helps them to begin as freshmen the process of intellectual and psychological maturing.

The writer is not primarily concerned with his particular method of handling this introduction to the field of philosophy and values. This method can be improved in countless ways. However, he is thoroughly convinced of the value and potentialities of such an introduction to some of the basic problems of one's philosophy of life. He believes that the work offers a way of enriching the content of freshman English and of guiding students' thinking in a vital area that is almost completely neglected by colleges today.

## BASES OF INEFFICIENT ADULT READING

GRETA HULTIN<sup>1</sup>

A majority of adult Americans who are dissatisfied readers have either one or both of two types of complaints: their eyes bother them when they read; or their reading speed and comprehension are inadequate for their needs.

The reader whose eyes bother him fusses around for some months making up his mind that he needs glasses until finally discomfort is greater than vanity and he gets his "reading glasses." If he is fortunate, the wearing of these solve his problem. But chances are he is as uncomfortable as ever.

Modern ophthalmologists are deciding that of equal importance with refractive errors as causes of visual fatigue and

discomfort are muscular irregularities. Moreover, they are finding that certain small errors may cause even more difficulty than other glaring gross errors. A badly smashed automobile minus bumpers, fenders, windows, and hood may travel smoothly for many miles, while the most attractive limousine stands useless because its gas line is plugged. It is the significance of the error to the vital working parts that determines its importance. A cross-eyed child may have less eye ache when reading than a straight-eyed child. Nearsighted persons are generally comfortable readers.

One of the most common "little" errors is that of poor duction power. It should be possible for a straight-eyed individual while maintaining single vi-

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sion to converge (cross) his eyes or to diverge them slightly as conditions demand. Looking from a book one is reading to a tree outside the window involves changing the relative position of the eyes several millimeters. Reading the book requires holding the eyes turned in for a considerable time. Many individuals who get headaches from reading have them because they cannot converge their eyes except with difficulty or because holding them turned in requires much effort. Exercises which strengthen the eye muscles involved in convergence are generally very effective in relieving this type of visual fatigue.

Other uncomfortable readers find it difficult to "fixate" properly. As is well known, the eyes are motionless while they "photograph" words or send messages to the brain. However, the eyes of some individuals are never quite still when they focus upon something as small as a word. As a result, the "photographs" taken are blurred and difficult to interpret, just as pictures taken with an unsteady camera are blurred. Poor fixation makes it necessary for the eyes to make many regressions; also, they make excessively numerous pauses. The waste of energy and causes of visual fatigue are obvious. Modern ophthalmologists analyze the reasons for the unsteady fixation and generally they can devise a simple remedial procedure for correction of the difficulty.

Occasionally visual fatigue is caused by difficulty in co-ordinating the two eyes. A pair of eyes may not work together well, although each is independently normal. An individual may use one eye at a time, alternating from one to the other; he may have difficulty fusing; he may lack depth perception or have some other error of co-ordination.

Oculists recognize these functional difficulties as being very real, and they are prepared to correct them in the majority of cases. They do not expect, however, that a pair of glasses will in every case insure visual comfort. The prescription today is frequently special exercise taken either at home or in a clinic, referral to an internist for improvement of general physical condition, operative procedure, or a combination of any of these.

The dissatisfied reader who does not complain of his eyes usually traces his troubles to inadequate reading speed and comprehension. The key to the causes of these inadequacies in the majority of individuals has been found to be basically psychological. The readers lack confidence. Each, arguing some self-manufactured theory, insists he has some particular handicap which dooms him to a life of poor reading. Analysis of reading habits reveals frequent regressions, reversals, omissions, insertions, and similar errors. But these are, in adult readers, most frequently symptoms, not causes, of poor reading. They are symptoms of insecurity, failure, a tense, muddled mind. The mechanics of reading were mastered in school, but the plunge into technical or essential reading was too abrupt. The basic movements necessary to swimming may be taught in shallow water, but the majority of us, if suddenly left to sink or swim in an ocean with no more familiarity with swimming than the basic principles, would flounder wearily, neither making progress nor actually sinking.

The basic cause of reading inefficiency thus being psychological in origin, any normal individual who seriously desires to improve his reading can do so. Investigations of the various adult remedial reading programs during the last ten years reveal that they are strikingly different in almost every respect except



one—they are all undoubtedly successful.

The psychological condition responsible for inefficient reading can most easily be corrected by removing the symptoms which identify it and give it reality. The basis of the new remedial reading techniques for the increase in reading efficiency by the adult is the elimination of unnecessary co-ordinations and the reduction in frequency of those co-ordinations which are essential. Unfortunately, many individuals complicate the silent reading process by adding extra functions. For example, they vocalize, thus adding the entire speech mechanism; or they are head-movers, causing neck muscles to assume minute movements entirely unrelated to the activity necessary for satisfactory reading. The poorer the reader, the more complicated the reading process is.

Vocalization seems to be the most serious acquired handicap of slow, silent readers. Because consideration of vocalization may serve to illustrate the logic of the new remedial techniques, consider it for a moment.

It is obvious to anyone with even a rudimentary knowledge of physiology that an eye-mind-speech synopsis requires more time and effort to complete than an eye-mind process. If, while driving a car, it becomes necessary to make a sudden stop, the brakes are instantly applied without an attempt to express to one's self what must be done. If one "tries to think," he will be too late. In cases of great personal stress the mind frequently ignores the speech centers, partly because it is too occupied to use them. In respect to reading, it is said, for instance, that the fastest a person has been able to read aloud intelligibly for an appreciable time is 250 words per minute, whereas more than a thousand words per

minute with good comprehension is frequently attained in silent reading. Frequent rest periods are also required by oral readers, evidencing the presence of fatigue.

There are some persons who believe, however, that unless they enunciate words as they read they cannot comprehend them. All are probably familiar with the appearance of a sheet of piano music and know that at times a pianist plays eight or more notes simultaneously. Even a rather poor player will strike these notes too rapidly to permit an eye-mind-speech-hand recognition of them. There is accurate comprehension without detailed conscious recognition. Words are symbols just as musical notes are. No valid reason appears why they cannot be as easily understood without being named.

Nonmusical readers may prefer the following simile. An inexperienced typist spells words as she strikes the letters; a moderately fast typist pronounces words; but a rapid one may type an entire page without being at all aware of the words as identities.

Fortunately, most persons can learn to read efficiently without enunciating. The primary requisite is confidence that vocalization is not essential to comprehension. A parallelism between a person learning to read efficiently and one learning to swim may be helpful in understanding how important a part confidence plays in the correction of this and many other poor reading habits.

The beginning swimmer must have something firm to which to hold. He will assure one, in all seriousness, that if he lets go he will sink. However, you know, and he reluctantly admits, that unless he lets go he can't possibly swim. Eventually the desire to swim becomes greater than the fear of sinking, and the

learner releases the viselike hold on his support and sinks. But after a few trials he sinks less promptly, and soon he is actually swimming. He has no further desire for the support.

Likewise, a beginning reader feels he must read aloud. He is as sure he can't read without pronouncing as a beginning swimmer is that he will sink if he doesn't hold on. Presently, however, the reader realizes that reading aloud handicaps him and he begins to pronounce words silently. If he becomes a good reader, he will find it necessary to discard pronunciation of any sort, just as a good swimmer ignores all supports.

Of equal importance with vocalization as a symptom of inefficient reading is excessive fixation or "stopping." An individual's reading in this respect may be compared with speeding a car for a block, coming to a sudden brief stop, then racing another block, jerking to a stop again, and repeating this procedure until the destination is reached. Good drivers maintain a slower speed between blocks, so that they can "play the lights," making a minimum number of stops. They not only reach their destination sooner and in a more relaxed condition but conserve their cars longer than poor drivers do. The eyes and central processes of an inefficient reader speed from word to word, but they make an unnecessary number of stops. And because the fixations are so frequent and hurried, the mind becomes confused, and it is necessary to regress in order to clearly comprehend. A good reader makes approximately three stops in reading ten

words. Poor readers may make from twelve to fifteen or more stops for ten words. This inefficiency is very fatiguing to the eyes, produces a "tension" of the body as a whole, and is wasteful of time and thought. Fortunately, poor habits of fixation also are rather easily supplanted by satisfactory habits.

Among the simpler remedial devices commonly used is the saccadic exercise which requires that the eyes move rhythmically between regularly spaced meaningless symbols, the crossline exercise which provides for the division of a printed page by vertical crossbars, eye-span exercises, and drill consisting of very rapid reading of easy materials. The more elaborate reading aids, such as the Harvard Reading Films, the Junior and Senior Metron-o-scopes, and other instruments which permit short exposures of words, provide more rigid discipline than less mechanical devices because they arbitrarily control the speed and frequency of fixations. All are derived in principle from the flash-card drill system well known in schools.

As a nation we like to read. Our novel-length daily newspapers, numerous magazines, and best-seller book lists are evidence of this. Enjoyment of reading is closely akin to the ability to comprehend printed material rapidly with a minimum of fatigue and eyestrain. Popular interest in the most adequate methods of achieving reading efficiency is continually more evident, and it is gratifying that educators are able to respond in an increasingly positive manner.

## HOMER'S WINK

HARRY W. HASTINGS<sup>1</sup>

### I

The ghost writers who specialize in helping students have become more bold than formerly and indeed have lately gone so far as to advertise their services in the New York papers somewhat as follows:

*We write it. You sign it.*  
Speeches, reports, dissertations, theses.  
Satisfaction guaranteed. Reasonable rates.  
*We write it. You sign it.*

Nor does the open printing of such advertisements mean that they have abandoned their long-established practice of sending personal letters to drum up business, for the following quotations come from a wheedling letter lately received by a student:

Why not make extra time for yourself by avoiding the drudgery of research and writing needed to produce good term papers and reports, and at the same time make sure of getting your A's and B's? Why not let me do that work for you?

Let me know your requirements . . . subject, course, number of words, Prof's specifications. You'll have my estimate on the job by return mail, and your O.K. will set me to work. And please don't delay. I have turned out A papers in a day and theses in a week, but the more time I have the better job you get, so drop me a line soon.

Over 1,500 students in 47 different schools have used my services within the past year.

Last winter one of the emboldened spirits came completely into the light of day, somewhat against his will, when arrested for selling a report to be used for college credit to an investigator posing

as a student. Newspapers reported that the arrest was made at the instigation of the New York State Department of Education and predicted that action would be brought under the provisions of a section of the education law.

"Cheating" is, of course, an old game. In English courses, for instance, it is chiefly done in two ways. One is the ghost writing referred to above. Every college has a few parasites, either enrolled as students or living in the community, who make their living by doing other people's work; and some of them have reached such a point of refinement, so I am told, that they boast they can secure a grade of A or a grade of C and can do anything from a freshman theme to a sermon.

The other common way of cheating among students is copying or paraphrasing; a student takes his theme or report from a book or magazine, with or without alterations. If he is shrewd, he uses some obscure source like an old high-school magazine, in which the articles are usually good enough to be acceptable in college courses but not good enough to arouse the instructor's suspicion. Or, finding that a file of old reports is kept in storage at his fraternity house, he may put in his thumb and pull out a plum from that pie. How much "cheating" goes on in one or the other of these two ways no one knows; but, though we all tend to hide our heads like ostriches, there is no denying that a considerable amount goes on in most colleges.

The attitude of students toward "cheating" varies from frank cynicism

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and unconcern to righteous indignation. Some take it for granted that in the silly game of securing a degree anything goes; the teacher is an opponent and the student plays against him: play any way you will, "With due regard for the policeman (or Dean) around the corner." Some justify "cheating" on the ground that one has to live, that marks are very important and competition keen, that the "real world" is full of worse things than copying a mere theme. Some, with a personal refinement of ethics, will help others though they would not accept help themselves. Some are annoyed to see Jones gets A's for work he doesn't do himself, whereas Smith gets C's for work he grinds out in the deep of night. Some refuse either to receive aid or to assist others and are zealous to campaign for law and order. That is to say, the range of students' sentiments and opinions is wide.

Undoubtedly the attitude of students often reflects the confusion in the mind of the general public, which thinks of ghost writing, if at all, merely as a lowly but legitimate and useful trade and of literary borrowing as a mysterious but very common phenomenon. The public accepts as impeccable the practice of the prizefighter whose magazine articles are produced by an acknowledged ghost; it condones that of the executive whose speeches are written by a publicity agent; it emulates that of the woman whose loudly applauded paper for the literary section of the Now and Then Club was written by her daughter, who is a junior at Mount Ida College. If a discussion of the propriety of such procedure arises in a moderately intelligent group of people, some will be sure to say that even the great writers have borrowed, that Shakespeare took his plots from the work of others, or that Hamilton wrote Washing-

ton's "Farewell Address" for him. If the group has in it a collector of curious information, he may point out that Laurence Sterne impishly put into *Tristram Shandy* a description of plagiarism which he had stolen from Burton or that Ralph Waldo Emerson paid a part of his college expenses by writing papers for fellow-students. The whole discussion may well come to focus in Kipling's amusing verses:

When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre,  
He'd 'eard men sing by land an' sea;  
An' what he thought 'e might require,  
'E went an' took—the same as me!

They knew 'e stole: 'e knew they knowed.  
They didn't tell, nor make a fuss,  
But winked at 'Omer down the road,  
An' 'e winked back—the same as us!

## II

The question as to how much assistance a student is entitled to get in doing his written work inevitably suggests such other questions as: What about copyright and literary piracy in professional writing? What, after all, is originality? Tough questions, indeed. They lead into amazing labyrinths whose mazes I am not bold enough or shrewd enough to thread, though I shall venture in a little way.

It is recognized that a man's literary work is property, just as his house is, and that, when he has duly filed a copy and paid a fee at the copyright office, he is entitled to legal protection. No unauthorized person may reproduce what he has written without the risk of being sued for piracy. But the author is protected also against certain less obvious uses of his work as the source or inspiration of other works by other people. Here one goes deep into the labyrinth, for from the evidence of the finished work of a literary pirate it is often impossible to say where



he got his ideas and whether legitimately or not.

In the novel, for instance, many types of characters, combinations of characters, incidents, and plots may be said to be within the common knowledge of mankind or to be typical of human activity. They belong in the "public domain" and are free to the use of all. The judge who is called upon to decide whether a given writer has been guilty of piracy must define what part of his material belongs in the public domain and must also consider the combination and organization of the materials, as well as the materials themselves. He soon finds himself involved in the perplexed consideration of the very nature of literary creation.

Is the work original? What is originality in art? Certainly any one who has read *The Road to Xanadu* will pause before answering. John Morley says somewhere that originality is the ability to use ideas. Ideas, I suppose, derived from experience or from other people. I remember also an old remark that there are two kinds of writing—the bird's-nest and the spider's-web kind. Whether the writer goes flitting hither and yon, seeking the things to build into his literary nest or spins a web from what seems to be his own substance, the process of creation is original. In one case he is conscious of his purpose: there is *unitas ante rem*. In the other, where experience has been quietly transformed in the secret chambers of intelligence, he is not at first conscious of a purpose: there is *unitas post rem*.

### III

But the consideration neither of copy-right nor of artistic originality is likely to bring the teacher much closer to answering the practical question of what to do about copied themes and ghost-written reports. When George Meredith read

manuscripts for the publishers, he liked to find in them evidence that "a mind had traveled." That is exactly what the teacher wants to find.

Writing narrative obviously makes the mind work in one way; writing argumentation makes it work in another. The thing of first importance for the teacher to ponder, therefore, and make his students ponder (if there is really any confusion as to what is honest work) is the different mental exercise required by each of the following:

1. *Copying*, in which the student reproduces exactly what he reads or what is dictated to him.
2. *Paraphrasing*, in which without substantially reducing the length of a passage the student puts it into other words.
3. *Translating*, in which the student interprets a passage in some foreign language—really a form of paraphrase.
4. *Summarizing*, in which the student condenses a passage to a fraction of its original length without misrepresenting its mood or its sense.
5. *Outlining*, in which the student skeletonizes the thought of a passage written by someone else or of an article which he himself proposes to write.
6. *Reporting*, in which the student digests and presents opinions or facts derived from reading a number of articles or books or from observation and interview.

Beyond these lies that mysterious province in which the student, whether he produce lyric or drama or short story or essay, does not consciously depend upon others' work. He spins the spider's web. And not even the spider knows just how it is done.

These simple distinctions were pointed out to me long ago by a sagacious head of department who was wrestling with a cheating case in which the culprit maintained, as is usual, that he didn't know what he was supposed to do. He thought it was all right to copy if you changed it a little. Maybe the instructor, who was

young then, did not know either. Maybe he had not considered what kind of mental activity was enforced by his assignment and what help the student needed to do the job.

Although I abhor the pedagogical sleuth, I have had to deal with "cheating" cases of great variety—from one in which the student ingenuously put in as his theme for the week paragraphs published by the president of the college in the current *Atlantic Monthly*, to one which became involved in a network of forged telegrams and anonymous letters and led eventually to the psychiatric ward—and I am convinced that sometimes the student really doesn't know the difference between legitimate and illegitimate. Usually, however, when he translates, without acknowledgment, a criticism of Flaubert from some history of French literature, or when he signs his name to a paper entitled "The Honor System," for which he has paid five dollars to some ghost writer, he knows. And

the teacher, under the obligation of protecting those students who do their own work, cannot argue that it is all like the folly of cheating at solitaire, that the "cribber" cheats only himself. He must know how to punish as well as how to prevent and to cure.

Upon the teacher rest many obligations: to be clear in purpose, in thought, in expression, to be vivacious and interesting, to be interested in life and in young people, to be interested in the individual, to be understanding. In the classes of the teacher who fulfils all these requirements, there will be little cheating. He must be ready to deal with it, however, even before it rears its ugly head. He must not allow the paraphrase of an article in the *Reader's Digest* to be delivered as an oral theme without acknowledgment that it is a paraphrase. He must know the dolt and the scamp and the desperate and the lazy and to each deal justice. He cannot wink back at Homer.

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## PERSPECTIVE

MARK VAN DOREN<sup>1</sup>

The absolutists of the new are unaware that the present as they see it is "but an ambiguous sentence," says Jacques Barzun, "out of its context." The problem is one of reading—an art which they despise. The past, which they mistakenly identify as the sole concern of liberal education, puts them on the defensive. They think of it, in John Dewey's words, as "a rival of the present," and accuse the intellectual of wishing to make the present "an imitation of the past." The problem is immensely

more complicated than that. The educated person recognizes no dry stretch between now and then. They are one river, and the more he knows about its length the better. He is a citizen of his age; but if he is a good citizen he studies the oldest laws as well as yesterday's statutes. He wants to know where things came from that neither he nor any contemporary invented. They may rejuvenate invention itself; an understanding of them may increase the rate of change fantastically beyond the dream of a provincial in time.

<sup>1</sup> In *Liberal Education*.

## ROUND TABLE

### A WORD FOR DAILY THEMES

While I do not like the idea of a theme a day for a year, as was the Harvard custom described by Walter Pritchard Eaton in his informal and stimulating "Daily Theme Eye," yet I do like a smaller dose of daily themes, because they help to "get the ink out" of student writing.

This is my experience: students hand me a page of writing each day, five days a week for six weeks. I read most of the pages, check obvious errors, and write brief comments on method and substance. In class I read themes anonymously. In each batch of themes there are several that are worth reading for one reason or another.

For instance, in describing the terrain of a summer tactic, a student may develop a fundamental image. Before reading the theme, I ask if anyone in the class knows what a fundamental image is. A wrong guess or two is about the best to be expected. Then I may say: "Well, one of you has written a description of a woodland, and in doing so he has developed a fundamental image. I'll read the paper, and you try to spot it. First look at the words [and I write them on the board], and then consider what in the description is an image, a picture, that is fundamental to, or underlying, the whole description." After hearing the theme, someone in the class will point out in effect what the fundamental image is. With a little discussion as to the usefulness of likening the unknown to the known and the economy of giving order to scattered details by relating them to a simple image and the interest arising from an apt comparison, most of the class members will see "fundamental image" as a name not for a mere rhetorical device but for a sensible procedure.

This method is inductive, of course, and subject to many variations. It can be

applied to matters other than grammar and rhetoric. Many forms of muddled thinking, trite or tame feeling, fuzzy words, will show up in the reading and discussion. After the class gets a taste of comment, it thirsts for more. It develops pride in its ability to "dish" it and to "take" it. "Now here's something you can sink your teeth into," I may say, and interest rises.

The discussion is important. A few leading questions by the instructor are enough. For instance, a paper that is poorly thought out will be unmasked if the instructor reads it and then asks, "What's it about?" The answers will be so varied that not even an overweening author will blame the stupidity of his ungente readers for the divergence. The constructing instinct of someone in the class may move him to suggest a way to put over the idea. Someone else may object and suggest what he thinks is a better way. Then the problem of effective development becomes a living issue. Or, for a further instance, two papers on the same general subject turn up. Both can be read, and a question as to which is better will set off the discussion and help form critical criteria.

In any class in which discussion is encouraged, results are improved if the too facile speakers are invited to limit themselves to, say, five short comments in a period. And if each speaker can feel that he is treated with respect even if with disagreement (the instructor should insist that speakers take their turns), then the danger of ruffled feelings will be scant. Olympic attitudes should be tempered with an undertone of dignified conviction: "We are citizens of a democracy and conscious searchers for truth; you are entitled to your beliefs, and you may be right; but this is my idea, and here are my reasons."

Daily themes are excellent sources of

discussion, and, being short, they allow range of topic with consequent increase of interest. An instructor can emphasize what he thinks needs emphasis by the kind of themes he reads aloud, by his questions or lack of questions, by his management of the discussion, and perhaps by feeding in a prize theme from another year if the fare is dry. He can offer an occasional short piece by a professional author, taken from current publications, by way of further incentive. He can also develop a list of common errors made by the class and point the accusing finger at those who forget it.

Scorn is a useful emphasis: "What! Every *one* minds *their* own business. Did I hear you, Mr. Jones, or is there a ventriloquist in the house?" Some traffic-cop scorn of that sort will do more good than a red "ref." in the margin. And if there is any doubt as to what the point is, one can always get Mr. Jones to tell the ventriloquist what is right.

Scorn, however useful it is for emphasis, must be mixed with friendly praise. The momentum of daily themes will turn up some clear characterization, clever endings, skilful arguments, neat phrases, thoughtful reflections, vigorous proposals, and much else. Such performance deserves recognition.

The reason I do not like a year dose of daily themes is that sustained development of an idea, mood, or situation is impossible. The daily theme gives momentum, it gives ample illustration of device and method, it gives practice in developing a topic and securing unity in small space. It gives the writing muscles daily exercise and hence gets the writer to feel comfortable with a pen in his hand. But it cannot give occasion for sustained attention.

Granted the limitations, I nevertheless heartily recommend a six- or eight-week session of daily themes any time in the year. Students like to write a theme a day, after the first shock wears off, and are proud of having to do it. I find correcting five one-pagers no harder than the usual weekly theme, except for entering grades.

More important, the instructor can meet his various classes on their own ground and lead out to whatever he considers the best other ground.

EMERSON G. WULLING

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### A FIFTEENTH-CENTURY CRITIC

Many have noticed a parallelism of the twentieth century with the fifteenth, of our present revolutionary period with that which we call the Renaissance. In both periods we can see great moving forces within and beneath the current culture that cause general dismay and confusion to those who identify civilization with traditional and familiar institutions.

In fifteenth-century England there occurred those desperate struggles between aristocratic parties that we call the Wars of the Roses. As a result of these long conflicts, government was brought into disrepute, there was general bribery and corruption, and the political life of Britain was in a strange ferment. But this was no mere political issue. Underneath all the disorder was the essential conflict between the medieval past and the new life of the Renaissance. Sir Thomas Malory was putting into his verse the romantic glory of a knightly past; while Reginald Pecock, on the other hand, was so liberal in his thinking as to be threatened with the death of a heretic.

In such a problematic time lived Robert Henryson, the schoolmaster of Dunfermline, whose poem, "The Twa Myss," has been called "one of the most perfect pieces of literary workmanship Scotland had produced." His "Testament of Cresseid" was a partial foundation for one of Shakespeare's plays. One of the Henryson's poems, "The Want of Wyse Men," pictures the social conditions of the Great Britain of his day. It is a satirical work whose vigor and spiciness must suffer in any translation into modern English. The following free translation from the archaic Scottish-English in which



it was written will strike a responsive chord in many who are perplexed and troubled by the conditions of our time. Two stanzas are omitted in this version of the poem.

### THE WANT OF WYSE MEN

A strange confusion lies on every town.

I wish some cunning wise man would declare  
What folly turns the whole world upside-down,  
That we can find no faithful founding there.

There are not three may safely trust the fourth;

None seeks our weal; wit has to swindling grown;

Joy turns to sorrow; fate destroys our worth;  
For want of wise men, fools are on the throne.

As books bear witness, when King Saturn reigned,

So wise his rule men called that era golden.  
Nowhere was man untruthful, honor feigned,  
And while Octavian the rule had holden

Peace was established, firm as heart desires;  
Good government and reason here were shown;

Now wisdom fails, nobility expires;  
For want of wise men, fools are on the throne.

Now right defenseless lies and desolate.

Under no roof have right and reason rest;  
Youth is uncertain, age is obstinate;

By cruel might the poor are all oppressed.

Wise men should teach the people what they know;

Even a little truth may so atone

That all the world may not to ruin go;

But, wanting wise men, fools are on the throne.

Exiled the noble courage of the past,

Loyalty, love, and liberality;

Stable integrity doth nowhere last,

Nor settled counsel of maturity;

No calm, no peace, but all perplexity.

Prudence and wisdom all are overgrown;

Nothing but wasting war can ever be,

While, wanting wise men, fools are on the throne.

Where are the balances of equity?

Neither is merit praised nor crime repressed;  
Lawlessness ever is at liberty,

While none submits to reason's stern behest.

Like brittle glass, man's faith is nothing worth,

True love forsaken, loyalty all gone;

Not worth a farthing is such rule of earth,

While, wanting wise men, fools are on the throne.

Wrong holds the rule, the law is wilfulness;

Innocent men are blamed for evil deeds;

Truth becomes treason; faith is fickleness;

Guile becomes guide, men join in evil deeds.

The church neglected, men use words profane.

Great God is grieved that men in anguish moan.

Such evil case must here on earth obtain

While, wanting wise men, fools are on the throne.

O Lord of Lords! Our God and Governor,

Maker and Mover, both of more and less,

Whose honor, power, and wisdom, more and more

All humble souls and virtuous confess,

As we have asked thee in our daily prayer,

Reform our world as only thou hast known,

Which lies degraded. In thy pity spare,

Since, wanting wise men, fools are on the throne.

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### CREATIVE THINKING IN THE NONFICTION BOOK REPORT

The writing of the book report usually required in freshman English has become in many colleges a meaningless task to both students and instructors. The nonfiction book reports seem particularly difficult to handle. The present writer, after conducting the nonfiction reports in the traditional ways, has finally hit upon a method that gets results—three very important results. One of the primary functions of the nonfiction report should be to encourage the student to think objectively about all kinds of human problems—to do what James Harvey Robinson calls "creative thinking." A second important function, and a necessary corollary to the first, should be to enable the student to read with understanding. And, finally, since reading and thinking are of no great value unless the resultant ideas can be adequately communicated, the third function of the book report should be to inculcate better writing habits. The present plan, though it emphasizes thinking, performs to a certain degree all three functions.

A few suggestions from John Dewey's *How We Think* are basic to the plan. Dewey

believes that there are five distinct steps in reflective thought:

(i) a felt difficulty; (ii) its location and definition; (iii) suggestion of possible solution; (iv) development by reasoning of the bearings of the suggestion; (v) further observation and experiment leading to its acceptance or rejection; that is, the conclusion of belief or disbelief.<sup>1</sup>

These suggestions, together with Dewey's explanation of them,<sup>2</sup> lay the groundwork for the "creative thinking" book report.

The plan itself is a simple one. Only four steps are necessary: (1) testing the student's thought reactions, (2) choosing a proposition and requesting the student to write an essay in support of his thought reactions, (3) selecting a book (or books) that fits the student's subject and his thought reactions, and (4) assigning the book report. First, the students should be tested to find what their thought reactions are to a number of controversial propositions. Mody C. Boatright's *Accuracy in Thinking*<sup>3</sup> contains exactly the type of test needed. His "Self-test" works this way: He lists twenty-one propositions—e.g., "Atheism is the only religion that frees the mind from fear"—and asks the student to evaluate honestly each proposition according to the following key: "1. So obviously absurd that no further consideration is merited. 2. Improbable. 3. Debatable. 4. Probable. 5. So obviously true that further consideration is unnecessary." Then, after the student has evaluated the propositions, Mr. Boatright asks him to indicate whether or not some of his reactions were emotional ("E" if in some degree emotional; "U" if unemotional). This last step is helpful but not absolutely necessary here. If retained, it can be varied—perhaps for the better—by suggesting that the student classify his thought reactions according to James Harvey Robinson's four kinds of thinking.<sup>4</sup> Also, for the present purposes, it might be well to add considerably to the

number of propositions in the test. It is important that the topics be numerous and varied enough to appeal to the interests of all types of students.

Obviously, tests of this type cannot be scored objectively, but a "1" or a "5," for example, in answer to such a proposition as this, "Every college student in America should be required to read Marx's *Das Kapital*," is a fairly definite indication that the student's emotions are interfering with his thought processes—even if the student has not seen fit to label his reaction "emotional." The student making such an answer, if private consultation reveals that he is definitely interested in the problems involved, should then be asked to write an essay in support of his opinion—an essay in which he clarifies and records his own ideas in preparation for the coming encounter with the professional opposition. But a proposition should not be assigned too hastily. The student must be led to choose a proposition in which he is definitely interested and about which he has decided opinions. Otherwise the instructor will later find himself at a loss to discover a book sufficiently challenging to jar the average student out of his unthinking complacency.

Now, assuming that the student has written a satisfactory essay in defense of his reaction to a given proposition, the instructor's problem is to suggest one or more books that disagree with the student's reaction. Just any book will not do. Careful selection is necessary—even though the instructor may have to do some library work in what may be strange fields.

Finally, after the student has studied the book or books assigned and has reconsidered his original stand, he is ready to write the book report. The nature and form of this report can, of course, vary considerably. In practice, the present writer has suggested that a student, to receive credit for a good report, should include the following material: (1) a brief restatement of his original stand as presented in the first essay, (2) a fair and accurate presentation of the pertinent arguments found in the book or books, (3) a comparison of his own arguments with those of

<sup>1</sup> (Boston, 1910), p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-78.

<sup>3</sup> (New York, 1938), pp. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> *The Mind in the Making* (New York, 1921), pp. 33-62.

the book or books, (4) a statement of his final conclusions on the problem, and (5) an estimate of the extent to which the reading has changed his mind.

Such, in brief, is the procedure. But, whether it looks good on paper or not, the final proof of its validity lies in the results which have been obtained in practice. Three different instructors have tried the plan on seven different classes and have found that it brings forth not only surprising improvements in thinking but also recognizable improvements in reading and writing. The student reports themselves, were it possible to quote them, would best substantiate these claims. As it is, a brief general description of the reports must suffice. Almost every student subjected to this type of report has changed his opinions or at least has recognized the necessity for rethinking the whole problem under consideration. A few of the better students have even gone so far as to modify or give up entirely a few of their most cherished prejudices. They have become in some measure "creative thinkers." Furthermore, a majority of the students have shown noticeable improvements in reading and writing—especially in the latter. Since no direct teaching of reading or writing skills is emphasized in this type of report, the improvements must derive from increased motivation and clarification of objectives. The students are challenged on their own ground; and, perhaps more important, they are forced to accept the challenge. Under these circumstances, to paraphrase the remarks of the students, there is a definite need for thinking and reading with acumen, for writing as clearly and effectively as possible.

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#### ON ENGLISH METRICS—AND CERTAIN ABSURDITIES

In the conviction that the usual study of English metrics may be a short cut to literary insanity, and without apology to the shades of the urbane George Saints-

bury and the ponderous Jakob Schipper, a protest seems indicated, if only out of pity for those youngsters innocent of classical languages whose "English teachers" insist on the mastery of much drivel concerning the dactyl and its fellows and relatives, thereby inoculating many against whatever threatens to be "poetry" in later reading. All of which involves implications leading to an initial absurdity.

By all literate persons (or at least those able to recall the meaning of the Latin *versus* and the Sanskrit *mā*), verse is properly thought of as lines of measured (i.e., metrical) language: it is by no means—despite college catalogues and professorial agents of confusion—the same with *poetry*, though when operating through a literary medium poetry generally finds its most memorable expression in verse. It would not be necessary to remark such simplicities were it not observable that many of the special academic custodians of literature persist in talking about "poetry and prose" as opposed categories (even labeling anthologies in consonance with such ideas), thus violating the most elementary concepts of aesthetic logic and mere good sense. (Oddly enough, these folk frequently do much of their praying by Wordsworth—while neglecting to remember the really significant footnote to his famous *Preface*.)

But let us be clear. Any utterance in language seems classifiable on (1) a technical and (2) a spiritual basis. *Technically* considered, language is (a) unmetrical (most prose), (b) metrical (verse), or (c) partly metrical (free verse and some prose—e.g., "polyphonic"). *Spiritually* considered, language may be (a) nonpoetic (the present essay—or Pope's *Essay on Man*), (b) poetic (*The Song of Solomon*—or *The Listeners*), or (c) partly poetic, whether *quantitatively* speaking, with reference to clear-cut physical portions (Sedley's *Love Still Has Something of the Sea*, poetic in its first two lines—or almost any spottily fine novel or play), or *qualitatively* speaking, with general reference to the whole (*The Everlasting Mercy*, bad as some of its passages are—or Helen Thomas' *As It Was*).

Now, of course, verse, being metrical, is likely both to invite more intensely emotional expression and to move with more pronounced flow (i.e., rhythm) than prose (which, indeed, tempts the ear to yearn and listen for regular pauses whenever rhythm becomes too obvious); and the real headaches and confusions, the genuine absurdities, in metrical study arise largely from analysis of rhythm. Incidentally, rhyme proper (a pleasure-intensifying refinement in intention) and stanzaic pattern (strophe) need affect present considerations no more than tone-color (properly a matter of aesthetics).

The troubles in question come, I think, mainly from (1) trying to scan English verse, with its flexible syllabic values, in the fashion of quantitative measures (leading to a misapplication of nomenclature) and (2) attempting to make exact—where there can be only imperfect, or partial—parallels between nonquantitative verse and music. Let us consider the latter, as the more subtle, of these practices first.

It is obvious that rhythm underlies technically both verse and music; it is not sufficiently recognized, however, that whatever be done with *tempo*, in either case, the time-relationship of note to note—the length of sound in relation to sound—within a measure of music will always satisfy a mathematical formula, whereas there is not of *intrinsic necessity* a similarly fixed relationship of syllable to syllable, word to word, within a measure of purely accentual verse such as the English, subject in the reading to all the hazards of speech and emotional variation, intellectual “interpretation,” and mood. It seems logical enough to admit a closer approximation of mathematical parallelism between *quantitative* verse and music—at least if one disregard such problems as that of the *syllaba anceps*; nonquantitative verse and music appear to have only such parallelism in general as is inherent in the fact that both are rhythmical. (*Stress*, of course, marking rhythm, operates in both quantitative and nonquantitative verse.)

One example should be sufficient to point

the absurdity and suggest the confusions of using “classical nomenclature” in analyzing nonquantitative verse. Let us take a line from the *Iliad* which can be properly read only as dactylic hexameter with customary spondee in the sixth foot:

αὖτις ἔπειτα πέδονδε κυλινθετο/λῆας ἀν/αίδης

— / — / — / — / — / —

Place beside this a line from *Evangeline*, in which Longfellow fancied he was writing in the Homeric meter:

This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines and the hemlocks. . . .

What sensible person would in reading accord this line the following quantities:

— / — / — / — / — / —

Who could argue that the first vowel of the line is “long,” the second “short,” etc.? And why call the line dactylic hexameter?

All considered, does it not seem desirable that technical analysis of English metrics limit itself mainly to the following considerations (some interrelated), while admitting that various people will, according to mood and other considerations, read, stress, and analyze given lines variously?

1. Rhythm and line-body: Rhythm preponderantly rising, falling, level, or variable in type; duple, triple, or other in character? Caesuras medial or variable? Endings masculine or feminine? Number of measures (feet: units of stress-influence) per line? Lines end-stopped or run-on?
2. Rhyme (if present): Initial, internal, end? Perfect, imperfect, assonantal?
3. Stanzaic types (if any) and general structure: Historical or novel?

The answers to such questions would more than satisfy the curiosity of most students, while finicky souls would in no way be prevented from discriminating between masculine and feminine caesuras (and the latter type's subdivisions—lyric and epic), debat-



ing resolved stress, and titillating over catalexis, anacrusis, and metrical enjambement.

After all, English metrics need be no bugbear, especially if one realizes (1) that, at best, metrical study is no more important to gifted versifiers than the study of harmony is to composers: i.e., far less important than usually suspected; and (2) that English (as a proclitic tongue with nondeclensional articles, subject to the old Germanic law of recessive accent) inclines organically toward a rising duple rhythm (and, one is tempted to suggest, toward a five-beat line—possibly

as the most natural compromise between literary and conversational periods).

But perhaps all speculation on metrics is essentially absurd? After all, who *really* cares what kind of rhythm points the fact that Phyllis

. . . . never fails to please?

Not I, for one.

GEORGE BRANDON SAUL

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# GLORY ROADS

JEREMIAH K. DURICK<sup>1</sup>

*The brown gray road from Southwark town,  
Where Pilgrims tell their story,  
Decks many a harassed doctor's gown,  
With multi-colored glory.*

*The trackless route to Tryermaine,  
Xanadu's fertile way,  
Yield up their ghosts in sweat and pain—  
Consult PMLA.*

*The maze the Red Cross Knight cut through,  
The Porter's primrose path—  
No sacred track is marked taboo  
To professorial swath.*

*Pray, scholar, you who walk these roads,  
Of vampires, mud, and poppies,  
Bearing your footnote-weary loads,  
For fifty reprint copies,*

*Rush on where angels fear to tread,  
Delve deep, since delve you must.  
You look for stones—we give you bread,  
So please excuse our dust!*

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## NEWS AND NOTES

### EAST AND WEST

Any teacher who has hunted high and low during his few spare hours for literature of China and India will be grateful for the brief and competent pamphlets issued by the East and West Association. Two of these, *The People of China* (March, 1943, 20 pp., 30 cents) and *The People of India* (April, 1943, 32 pp., 40 cents), are compact and satisfying helps for the teacher who has only a short time to give to these neglected fields. In them Mrs. Lily Edelman, of the staff of the Association, has gathered information about the racial makeup of the areas, the daily life of the people, and their religion, their arts, literature, music, and science, their history, and their leaders. She suggests topics for investigation and recommends books suitable for further exploration. Her text is terse and spirited, suitable for the understanding and enjoyment of boys and girls from the ninth grade up. So far as I know, there is no publication which gives in little space so much of what high-school students and their teachers are trying to find out.

If a teacher wishes to go beyond what is suggested in the two printed pamphlets, he may consult the three mimeographed lists on "What To Read about China": "General Bibliography" (20 cents); "A List for College Students" (15 cents); and "A List for High-School Students" (10 cents). A similar set is ready for India, at corresponding prices. Teachers will also be interested to know that a set of Russian pamphlets is in preparation.

Besides the publications mentioned, the East and West Association can provide mimeographed copies of radio programs, addresses on oriental countries, and other teaching aids, free of charge or at prices to cover the cost of mimeographing; including, too, some material that bears on attitudes

toward races within our own country. The Association welcomes inquiries from teachers, addressed to its office at 40 East Forty-ninth Street, New York City. Pearl Buck is president of the Association and actively interested in forwarding its purposes.

In April, 1943, over ten thousand students took the English composition test of the College Entrance Examination Board. This figure is nearly double the number of those who wrote the comprehensive English examination in 1941. Eventually it will be possible to secure evidence on which correlations between the score on this test and English grades in school and college can be determined. Its presence among the achievement tests should serve at once to prevent the decrease of attention paid to writing in schools.

For 1943-44 the College Entrance Examination Board has announced that tests will be given December 4, April 15, June 3, and September 6. On each of these days the Scholastic Aptitude Test, three achievement tests, and the Comprehensive Mathematics Test will be given. The new calendar of four test sessions a year will accommodate freshmen who wish to enrol for any of the three or four terms of the present all-year college schedule.

The first conference for English teachers to be held in Nicaragua took place in the American Library at Managua last June. Of the total of forty-eight teachers of English in that country, twenty attended all three sessions of the conference. These meetings had important results. An association of teachers of English was organized, and a permanent committee was appointed to serve as an advisory group to the Minister of Public Instruction.

This news is taken from the September *Education for Victory*, which is replacing *School Life* for the duration.

An international conference on post-war education was held at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, September 14-18. Members of the International Education Assembly from Poland, Greece, Czechoslovakia, China, and other United Nations told of the fury with which the Nazis and Japs have destroyed secondary schools and colleges. "Give us the tools and all possible help," the educational leaders said, "and we'll do the educational reconstruction job ourselves." The conference is briefly reported in the *Express News Letter*, October 6, from the Educational Press Association.

A survey of recent educational literature which is important for teachers of English appears in the April *Review of Educational Research*. The author, Dora V. Smith, summarizes books and articles and presents bibliographies on composition, public speaking, vocabulary, spelling, and handwriting. Materials reviewed pertain to the teaching of these subjects in both high school and college.

#### THE PERIODICALS

The work of three American critics, Allen Tate, John Crowe Ransom, and Cleanth Brooks, consists largely in an effort to define poetry as intellectual exercise and to deny that its value consists in its appeal to the feelings. In the autumn *American Scholar*, Darrel Abel explains the peculiar narrowness of this school of criticism. Sidney, Johnson, and Coleridge agreed that poetry expresses truth and communicates pleasure. The intellectual critics require simply that poetry give us "complete cognition." Romantic and idealistic poets, they believe, have wishfully interpreted experience. Shakespeare indulges the feelings, yet provides little food for the intellect. Shelley and Wordsworth proclaimed their convictions too passionately. Poetry, Ransom says, "wants only to know the untechnical homely fullness of the world"; or, as Tate says, "Poetry proves nothing; it creates the totality of experience in its quality." Poetry is weakened, according to the intellectual

critics, if the personality of the poet obtrudes itself between the reader and the perceptions in the poem. Therefore, they prefer the elaborate formal screen, as in the poetry of Donne, rather than the intuitive writing of poets who depend on suggestion. Thus metaphysicals and obscure modern poets are commended for the visibility, complexity, and detachment of their poetry, which refuses to "oversimplify experience."

In the vocabulary of the intellectual critics, "knowledge" and "cognition" mean viewing facts in such ironic relations that their implications do not agreeably contribute their force to a common center but instead oppose and destroy each other. Obscure modern poets, Ransom observes, "play with a great deal of important predication without completing any." Ransom says that the poetry which interests us is "the act of an adult mind; and I will add, the act of a fallen mind, since ours too are fallen." Only by wilful delusion could we longer inhabit the enchanted world of the romantics, with its vehement affirmations.

With the development of modern scientific thought came a general distrust of poetry, the "literature of power," or insight. Criticism, then, occupied itself with rationalizing poetry for a world that expects its values to be ponderable, and it became in some degree misrepresentative of literature, which is an effort to discover the values of the highest sensibilities. It was against this tendency to translate the values of literature into lower values that the art-for-art's-sake view was presented. Intellectual criticism is a contemporary variation of this doctrine. Its defenders overlook the fact that the poet does not make values but expresses those of common humanity in a permanent construction which holds them and makes them less elusive. The intellectual critics mistakenly insist that poetry is a special knowledge, defined in forbiddingly formalistic terms.

Wordsworth and Emerson stressed the conscious humanity or representative faculty of the poet, who enables other men to realize their humanity. By degrees man has lost his distinctness from nature and lapsed

into being himself an undistinguished natural phenomenon. The intellectuals represent a race of beings who have lost their convictions of selfhood.

The idea of a folk tradition leads the contemporary American artist nowhere. Still, the question of the relation between the formal artist and the folk is muddled in the extreme, and in the September-October *Partisan Review* Louise Bogan examines it "with as much detachment as possible."

Because of abnormal situations, political or otherwise, which kept folk traditions alive late in urbanized society, Yeats in Ireland and Lorca in Spain crossed the barrier of the middle class to create formal art from the folk tradition. In America the culmination of the folk song appeared in Stephen Foster, who expressed the sense of profound nostalgia for an already disappearing nonurban way of life. The holdover of this nostalgia causes the sentimentalization of Foster by his modern audience. Clearly, however, he was the end of one kind of American folk, the point beyond which no unadulterated development of his kind of material was possible. Later, the old way of American life was rediscovered in the middle-class enthusiasm for the American antique, and the folk tradition became bourgeoisified. There is no way for the artist to get at it.

England and France, with a head start of forty or fifty years of true industrialism, produced a townfolk, whose tradition channeled itself into the music hall. But the music hall decayed. It was based on that period of "proletarian" existence when the workers were stiffly incased in the tradition of knowing their place. At present the urban folk art of England or America is vigorous and more sophisticated than that of an older period. Compared to the songs of the up-right-piano and sheet-music era, the most naive songs of the juke box are less awkward and saccharine, more vitalized.

Folk crosses formal art (1) when folk has reached a moment of comparative breadth and elegance (when it can well express anything from the grotesque through emotion

and satire) and (2) when formal art has become easy and secular enough to recognize just what is happening among the folk. A long time must elapse in America before these conditions will be fulfilled. In the meantime, the middle-class hope that Stokowski can be crossed with Disney is at once previous and misplaced.

During the war American colleges are selling education on contracts, delivering the article according to the specifications of the service department which orders it. Contract-buying of education may continue after the war, as government and industry continue to find the present system useful. We may expect, furthermore, that the easy market of pre-war days will not soon return, with parents freely paying the bills and remaining indifferent to the intellectual aspects of their children's training.

If the colleges are to hold their own, educators must rid the curriculum of its waste and inefficiency and build a program which will serve the people in their main cultural needs. We have allowed the college curriculum to fall to pieces under the elective system; we have allowed secondary education to lose character and solidity by succumbing to the soft theories of soft educators.

One view of what should constitute a sound educational program, for high school and college, is expressed by William Clyde Devane in the autumn *Yale Review*. The common curriculum, redefined for high schools, includes four parts. It is designed to bring pupils to a high degree of proficiency in a few fundamental disciplines. First comes the requirement of reading, writing, and speaking English, which rests upon rigorous grammatical analysis, analysis of written matter for understanding, and endless practice in writing and speaking. English courses lead up to the study of some great books, such as Shakespeare, the Bible, Milton, and Homer. The second portion should be a continuous study of mathematics. As a third portion the pupil should be introduced to the conceptions of the natural sciences—physics, biology, and geology especially to be recommended. Fourth, the high-



school student needs courses in history in which he would learn of American institutions and their European backgrounds. The precollege student must, in addition, be thoroughly grounded in an ancient language and in a modern one.

A good college has a threefold function: to provide a general education; to give a student a sense of mastery in a particular field; and to bring him to that point of maturity at which he is capable of independent work. The curriculum, which must be as adequate for our day as the Greek and medieval syntheses were for their times, should be divided into four parts. Natural sciences, historical perspective, and the social sciences are three of the divisions. Problems of the social sciences are as old as man, and their principles were laid down ages ago in many an eternal treatise, beginning with Aristotle's *Politics* and Plato's *Republic*. The social sciences must put far more emphasis upon theory and principle.

The fourth great field in a program of general education deals with man and his permanent values. Literature, the fine arts, philosophy, and religion come in this field, and philosophy is the summation and ordering of all the other subjects.

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#### D. FOE—DEFOE

We are all familiar with the inclination of many students to convert the name O. Hen-

ry into the more glib and Irish-sounding O'Henry. The tendency to do this arouses curiosity as to whether Defoe's name may have suffered some similar alteration. It is known that the family name of that amazing pamphleteer was Foe. For years he signed his name D. Foe. At just what time he used his present surname has not been made clear. But it is easy to surmise that D. Foe was popularly regarded as DeFoe and then the Daniel was placed before it. Defoe would, of course, offer no objections and without doubt readily adopted the augmented cognomen.

D. S. MEAD

PENNSYLVANIA STATE COLLEGE

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#### WINDOW

The word "window" is Scandinavian and, no doubt, was forced into the English language by a Norseman or a Dane.

Just how much windows, by whatever name one calls them, have meant to civilization is not always realized. Glass windows which let in the light have brought cleanliness, beauty, and health into our houses.

Barbarous homes, unblest by the sun, are undecorated and filthy, mere shelters to protect their unlucky owners from the rain and storm.

EPSY COLLING

## BOOKS

### WRITING FROM OBSERVATION

The purpose of *Writing from Observation*,<sup>1</sup> a freshman book of readings and models, is to "direct class discussion and themes toward the intelligent organization and recording of the student's own inspection of the world" by the use of "materials that show how writers have actually observed the world about them and conveyed their observation in various forms."

Concerning the value of such a purpose for a course in composition there can be no argument. Application of the principle of observation, usually thought of in connection with the scientific method only, is fundamental also in an approach to writing and to an understanding of life. For the student it is an initial step in gathering material for and giving content to his writing; it can prevent amateurish treatments of personal experience and narrative or exposition which contains more opinion than fact or which lacks adequate preliminary preparation. Consequently, the idea of assembling materials illustrating the methods and written expression of observation was an excellent one.

The six parts of the book fall into two divisions, one dealing with the practice, or expression in writing, of observation, and the other with the theory, or, as it is here named, the principle of observation. The first five parts of the book illustrate direct observation (of the family, nature, the city, the student, and one's self) by means of appropriate writing chosen from noteworthy modern authors—Steinbeck, Lewis, Wolfe, Galsworthy, Conrad, Wells, Benét, to mention a few—although older authors are represented—Montaigne, Franklin, Thoreau,

Whitman, Hardy. Discussions of the principle of observation are included from some of these authors also, as well as from James Harvey Robinson, Thurman Arnold, Haya-kawa, Plato, and L. A. G. Strong. The total number of selections is 74; of authors, 58. Since the expression of observation is varied, different forms of writing are included. Statistically, these are: fiction, 12 examples; essays and articles, 25; poems, 20; autobiography, journals, and letters, 13; and one example each of profile, interview, parody, and dialogue.

A valuable guide for students in their reading of each selection is provided by a series of questions, usually four to nine, labeled "Analysis and Observation." These, too, are built around the principle of observation, and from their study and application a student cannot help but profit. Not only do they introduce him to methods of reading for comprehension; they teach him to observe in his reading effective methods of writing, such as word meanings, word uses, significance of sentences and paragraphs, plans of organization, means of achieving certain purposes, and the like; and they encourage him to find his own materials for writing in direct observation of life.

On the negative side, one wonders whether a few of the selections—some of the poems, for example—may not be too difficult for freshmen (granting that "a man's reach should exceed his grasp"); whether, for freshman composition, the number of poems is not too large; and (granted that the editors intended such writing for future semesters of composition) whether the book might not have been made even more effective by the inclusion of questions relating the models to specific types of narrative, description, and exposition.

The preparation of the book was a cooperative enterprise by thirty-three members of the department of English at Wayne

<sup>1</sup> Edited by Leslie A. Hanawalt and Emilie A. Newcomb. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1942. Pp. xvi+528. \$1.60.

University. The present edition is the harvest from three years of trial with two experimental editions, and it is quite possible that actual use of the book in the classroom not only emphasizes its many merits but also obviates the few negative criticisms mentioned above.

GEORGE S. WYKOFF

PURDUE UNIVERSITY

### MASTERS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

*Masters of English Literature*,<sup>1</sup> is certainly an excellent text of its kind. As the title indicates, it aims to provide a liberal meal from the works of twenty-two of the best writers rather than sample dishes from the many. To make it function as a survey text, the editors have included introductions which place the authors in proper perspective and interchapters which bridge the gaps between greatness. Thus the book is integrated, correlated, and functionalized, as the authorities on pedagogy would put it.

The explanatory parts are strikingly done. Their style is easy and entertaining, which tempts the reviewer to dwell upon them. Yet they are tersely written and include a large amount of fundamental data—so much, in fact, that an independent student could give himself a very good idea of English literature without benefit of instructor. The instructor, in turn, freed from the necessity of discussing topics about literary works, can concentrate upon the works themselves. All too often, survey teachers have been so buried in backgrounds that thoughts and ideas were neglected. This is tragic now that Greek and Latin are virtually taboo and our cultural heritage is passed on, if at all, by the teaching of English literature.

<sup>1</sup> Paul Spencer Wood and Evelyn Mae Boyd, *Masters of English Literature*. 2 vols. New York: Macmillan Co., 1943. Pp. 1033 and 1035. \$3.25 each vol.

The choice of readings is refreshing. One welcomes the changes, for they break the monotony of always illustrating an author by the same work. Examples are: fairly adequate portions of Chaucer's marriage group, the second book of the *Faerie Queene*, enough of *Paradise Lost* to provide a view of the whole, two full cantos of the *Don Juan*, and the three *Idylls of the King* which conclude the story and make clear the moral and political message of the work. Furthermore, one admires the editors for making a choice among Shakespeare's plays. Many will quarrel with the choices, but at least the dramatist is "represented by more than his lyrics."

The simplification in the book is, I suppose, a merit, though it brings a nostalgic pain. The Preface defends the limited scope by saying that beginners should not be "submerged in the work of many writers." It defends the modernization of texts on the ground that writing *u* for *v*, *i* for *j*, and *þ* for *th* "would needlessly obscure the sense." All foreign phrases have been translated, for the same reason, I assume. Taken together, these are mute evidence that contemporary students are ill equipped for the study of literature.

With but one trait of this book do I seriously quarrel: the volumes are too tall for home bookshelves, and they weigh nearly eight pounds. They strain even a professorial brief case. How can the student carry them about, if he has also a notebook, a laboratory manual, a pack of index cards, and texts for two or three other courses? In these days of little gasoline, only a mother can manage an eight-pound baby with all appurtenances. The bulk seems due to the publisher's desire to include everything that any teacher might like to use. This may increase sales, but it does not engender a love of books and a desire to keep them. The result is a rather large turnover for the second-hand dealer—and that is a thought for publishers, too.

ERNEST VAN KEUREN

EVANSVILLE COLLEGE

A FRESHMAN OMNIBUS<sup>1</sup>

The revision of Professor Cargill's earlier *Highways in College Composition* (1930) is an attempt to satisfy all shades of preference as between handbook and rhetoric and to follow a recent practice of including everything for the freshman course in one volume. This effort at completeness is further indicated by the appearance at the end of each chapter of the rhetoric and the reader review questions and suggestions for oral and written classwork and assignments.

The rhetoric (289 pp.) contains a wealth of advice on composition, including an unusual and desirable chapter on writing for other courses which should not only help the student but also aid in bridging the gap between the English class and other classes. In several instances throughout the rhetoric, however, the authors have not said as much about the topic as it would warrant. In the chapter dealing with research papers, for example, no instructions are given for taking notes beyond telling the student the kind of paper to use and explaining that he may either quote or paraphrase. Certainly there are many fruitful suggestions that could be made on this important subject. Again, a freshman is hardly helped either to write or to appreciate the sublime style by being told merely that sublimity is a characteristic of the Semitic mind and that Milton often achieved the sublime. To help the student, too, a number of quotations of kinds or qualities of writing are given, but only very rarely are the quotations analyzed so that the student may actually see the qualities exemplified. In general, the rhetoric loses value because it lacks precision of instruction and completeness of analysis of qualities of writing or of illustrations of kinds of writing and because it frequently uses the general statement and literary cliché as substitutes for more explicit, if less flashy, directions. Precision and immediate applicability of suggestion are especially demanded in a guide for beginning writers.

The anthology contains a wide variety of

prose materials, excluding drama, and will prove adequate for most teachers. The material, all very new and modern, is designed purely to inform students and to stimulate class discussion. The texts for models of composition are very few and are all contained within the rhetoric.

The handbook, save for a glossary of terms, is happily reduced to those items which will be of use to the teacher and the student in the grading and correcting of papers. Both handbook and rhetoric are conservative in point of view—insisting, for example, on the "rules" for *shall* and *will* in the face of the findings by Fries—and acknowledge only one level of usage save for an occasional concession to spoken English. No use is made, either, of the offerings of semantics, which some teachers will miss.

In general, the volume offers a handy compilation of materials, with especially up-to-date and provocative reading selections, for an orthodox freshman English course.

THOMAS F. DUNN

Drake University

## AH, BUT IS IT SCIENCE?

In *Modern Fiction* Professor Muller sought in literature the values by which men live. He came to the optimistic conclusion that certain values abide because of "the immutability of human nature." In *Science and Criticism*<sup>2</sup> he has broadened his field of investigation. What implications, he asks, has modern science to criticism? One by one he takes up current theories in physics, biology, psychology, and sociology. He concludes that certain values abide because all things, including science and human nature, are mutable. These values, now based firmly upon the Heraclitean flux, are skepticism, tolerance, uncertainty, and, if necessary, inconsistency. And these, he tells us, are the very values promulgated by the humanistic tradition from Chaucer to Mann. Hence all knowledge can be synthesized into a philosophy of scientific humanism. Science provides the ultimate authority for our

<sup>1</sup> H. A. Watt, Oscar Cargill, and William Charvat, *New Highways in College Composition*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1943. Pp. 1060. \$3.25.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert J. Muller, *Science and Criticism*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1943. Pp. 303. \$3.75.



values, humanism discovers them, and criticism applies them. In his concluding section he criticizes, by means of this synthesis, philosophy, literature, religion, and democracy. Criticism, of course, is used in the wide Arnoldian sense.

Such a study may seem too broad. Actually it is too narrow. It fails to illustrate in practice the values which Professor Muller feels we should derive from science. Thus, though he is properly skeptical about using religion as an authority, he has no hesitation in so employing science. Yet, if authority has no "value" in the one situation, why in the name of skepticism has it in the other? What relation between science and criticism explains why values flow from the former to the latter, and how they do so? Unfortunately, no verifiable evidence is given to establish between the two fields a causal connection which would allow implications to be drawn. They may be related causally. They may be parallel but independent manifestations of our culture. They may be altogether unrelated. Professor Muller simply ignores the question.

This problem, however, lies at the very heart of his theory of values. A scientific approach would demand its investigation. Suppose, for instance, that criticism, in Muller's sense, is found to be the source of scientific values? The sciences investigate certain aspects of reality because this seems valuable. Where does this "value" come from? Again, Professor Muller investigates certain aspects of science, presumably because this is valuable. Does the "value" come from science? In discussing sociology, he considers Marx and Pareto but ignores Spengler and Sorokin. What "value" drawn from science dictates this selection and rejection? The scientific skepticism which Professor Muller recommends should have led him to examine more closely his own assumptions and methods.

Moreover, the same absence of scientific analysis extends to his discussion. Each science, it is assumed, has a message all its own, but the message is rather delivered than explained. The implication of physics is that, "once the critic has got his assump-

tions on the board, he can pick up from the physicist some general hints about how to play them." Neither Professor Muller nor the five physicists who still speak to me can explain what these "general hints" are. From biology we learn that "in the implications of evolution . . . we must find the ultimate authority for our values." Why we must is passed over. Psychology, according to Professor Muller, is a welter of conflicting theories, but the "literary critic can be content with the obvious pertinence of all these psychologies, and can even welcome their diversity. In adapting the various provisional findings to his own uses, he can get along well enough with practical wisdom." What in the name of Freud is the "obvious pertinence" of conflicting psychologies? And, if some such abstraction as "practical wisdom" suffices, why in Adler go to psychology in the first place? The implications of sociology are still darker, since the theories which Professor Muller discusses are not only inconsistent but contradictory.

It may be true that criticism should draw its values from science. It is rather difficult, however, to believe that Professor Muller has done so. The unscientific haste to publish his findings before discovering what they mean mars both his style and his presentation. The lack of any scientific method still further reduces the value of his study of value. And his veneration for "science" in the abstract, taken together with his condemnation of scientists in particular, may make the scientist a little jumpy. Indeed, one reflection alone prevents recourse to Jeffrey's handy statement on *The Excursion*. Those who like to curl up with a literary summary of scientific theories will construe any condemnation as an attack upon science itself. In deference to this peculiar schizophrenia of the reading public, *Science and Criticism* must be recommended. And it does have one value. Like Pollock's *Nature of Literature*, it illustrates concretely some of the pitfalls which future writers in this field might well avoid.

FREDERIC R. WHITE

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## IN BRIEF REVIEW

[Mention under this head does not preclude review elsewhere.]

## FOR THE GENERAL READER

*Our Young Folks.* By Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Harcourt, Brace. \$2.75.

This book is the result of close contact with the research done by the Youth Commission of the American Council, of which Mrs. Fisher was an active member. It talks over informally the problems of youth past and present. (To understand the future, she says, look at the past.)

Mrs. Fisher credits each young person with individuality, yet believes that much may be said of young people as a group. There is no fundamental difference between the share-cropper's son and the prep-school lad. The situations which they must meet, thanks to our economic, political, and social setup, have important elements in common.

"Ashes on our heads are the vast sums we do not vote to teach and train." Our nation was in danger long before the declaration of war because we failed to make sure that our youth were trained—occupied. We can be pretty sure that much which now seems like change in the surroundings of young people will evaporate after the war, leaving us facing the problems that brought aching frustration to youth before 1940.

The book is a valuable stimulator for educators and very useful to rouse parents to needed action.

*None but the Lonely Heart.* By Richard Llewellyn. Macmillan. \$2.75.

The author of that lyrical nostalgic novel, *How Green Was My Valley*, here portrays the life of a London Cockney. Ernie Mott wanted money and beautiful women and a place in the sun. He was not hungry or cold or homeless, but he wanted a lot more and didn't want to work for small wages in petty jobs. This is a fine study, and we think we detect a new note in fiction. Society is to blame for much, but how develop responsibility in the individual?

*The Big Rock Candy Mountain.* By Wallace Stegner. Duell, Sloan. \$3.00.

Bo Mason personifies the American dream of the pot of gold, just as his wife and children personify the dreams of the American family. The novel covers a wide range of country and emotions. Always the family was moving on, toward greater promises, never quite in want, never quite desperate. A dramatic, tragic study of human motives and lack of individual responsibility, of a man's demand for adventure, thrills, and big money.

*The Trespassers.* By Laura Z. Hobson. Simon & Schuster. \$2.75.

Two stories run parallel: one of Jasper Crown and his love of power, and one of an Austrian family seeking entrance to the United States. The main

theme of the book is an intense sympathy for refugees and the author's heated criticism of countries which set up any quota or law against admitting them en masse. The heroine, when Jasper Crown proves false, turns to an all-absorbing love for refugees. She wins peace and a husband, the man's wife fortunately dying to make this happy ending possible.

*The Mothers.* By Vardis Fisher. Vanguard. \$2.50.

This story of pioneer hardship and courage is based upon the heroism of the mothers of the Donner party. A study of human nature under intense strain. Fiction, but characters and scenes are real.

*Only an Inch from Glory.* By Albert Halper. Harper. \$2.50.

This study of ambitious young people—restless, rootless, blind to responsibilities to self and to society—is in a vein quite different from Halper's earlier books of class struggle. Largely the story of four young people—representative of legions—who grope to satisfy their vague longings in New York. Again there is a note of the individual fighting against the discipline of seemingly trivial obligations of life—demanding big money and glory, which seems sometimes only an inch ahead. Class struggle of another sort?

*Twenty-five Short Stories by Stephen Vincent Benét.* Garden City. \$1.49.

Collected for the first time in one volume. Including "The Devil and Daniel Webster" and William Rose Benét's "My Brother Steve."

*A Book of Short Stories.* By Maxim Gorki. Edited by Avraham Yarmolinsky and Baroness Maura Bidberg. \$3.00.

Fifteen short stories chronologically arranged. Foreword by Aldous Huxley.

*A Certain Measure.* By Ellen Glasgow. Harcourt, Brace. \$3.50.

An interpretation of prose fiction, composed of revised forms of essays written as prefaces to her own novels. The author in these commentaries and discussions reviews her work as a whole from her present point of view and also affords a study of the social and literary study of Virginia for the past of almost a hundred years.

*The Duke.* By Richard Aldington. Viking. \$3.75.

A distinguished biography of the Duke of Wellington. Covers his early years and his campaigns in India, Portugal, and Spain, as well as Waterloo. Analogies to our own time give added interest.

*Paris-Underground.* By Etta Shiber. Scribner's. \$2.50.

How an English and an American woman took an active part in helping a hundred and fifty British soldiers escape from occupied France. Eventually the Gestapo trapped them. A heroic and inspiring true story.

*The Bayous of Louisiana.* By Harnett T. Kane. Morrow. \$3.50.

The author has shown a real love of the people and the country in describing the lush vegetation, the waters teeming with shrimp, crabs, gators, and turtles and the descendants of Arcadians, with Old World customs and speech. Today, says the author, to an extent that may seem incredible, there flourishes the tradition of France-in-America that may soon pass with the intrusion of buses, schools, and the draft. Illustrated.

*The Republic: Conversations on Fundamentals.* By Charles A. Beard. Viking. \$3.00.

Written in the form of a series of conversations among friends, more free from personal prejudices and private interests than such conversations are wont to be. These people, all baffled but guided by one well-informed mind, discuss just the topics which are the subjects of debate and controversy among groups of perplexed citizens.

*Brown Americans: The Story of a Tenth of the Nation.* By Edwin R. Embree. Viking. \$2.75.

For fifteen years the author has been president of the Julius Rosenwald Foundation, interested in the Negro in America. This is a fresh interpretation of an old problem, unbiased and unafraid, with special emphasis upon new and international complications and social implications.

*Ambassador to Industry: The Idea and the Life of Herman Schneider.* By Clyde W. Park. Bobbs-Merrill. \$3.50.

In his youth Herman Schneider saw the gap between academic college training and actual business practice. At the University of Cincinnati he sought to bridge this gap. One of Dean Schneider's co-workers has written a rich and suggestive study of his life and his co-operative plan of education.

*Naturalist at Large.* By Thomas Bradford. Atlantic. \$3.50.

A rambling, pleasant book of reminiscences by a personality with many impressive titles. Full of exciting incident, unexpected nature lore, and curious behavior, this book affords a very pleasant change from high-pressure problem books which we should read.

*Asia Unbound.* By Sydney Greenbie. Appleton-Century. \$3.00.

This study of Asia is based upon the author's twenty-five years' experiences in China, Japan, India, etc. He paints his picture of the effect of the Four Freedoms upon these widely dissimilar Asiatic peoples. This is an honest treatment of a problem of utmost importance, based upon a writer's well-grounded knowledge and understanding of the peoples of whom he writes.

*The Apostle: A Novel Based on the Life of St. Paul.* By Sholem Asch. Putnam. \$3.00.

Paul's persecution of Christians and his conversion and vigor in preaching the faith he had sought to destroy. There are descriptions of religious practices and many colorful scenes. An amazing panorama of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. Readers familiar with *The Nazarene* will welcome this novel.

*The American: The Story of the Making of a New Man.* By James Truslow Adams. Scribner's. \$3.00.

American history as it molded American character and developed our proud "American way of living." Significant.

*Excuse My Dust!* By Bellamy Partridge. Whittlesey. \$2.75.

An informal history of the automobile, humorous and forceful. By the author of *Country Lawyer*.

*My Family, Right or Wrong.* By John Philip Sousa III. Doubleday. \$2.00.

Another hilarious family story—you like it or you don't.

*Bright Is the Morning.* By Robert Gibbons. Knopf. \$2.50.

Winner of the Knopf Fellowship in fiction. A dramatic, violent story of human relationships in a southern farm family.

*Muller Hill.* By Harriet M. Daniels. Knopf. \$2.75.

A picturesque historical romance of New York City in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many real personages.

*Maggie No Doubt.* By Maggie-Owen Wadeldon. Bobbs-Merrill. \$2.75.

The "violent woman" of her son's *My Mother Is a Violent Woman* has already published a journal of her youth in Ireland. Now we have her life since she came to the United States. Good escape reading.

*A Few Happy Ones.* By Judy Van der Veer. Appleton-Century. \$2.50.

On a ranch in a California valley live these happy animals and their happy caretaker (owner). For readers who love land and animals.

*Know Your Hay Fever.* By Dr. Abraham P. Sperling and Dr. Arthur Berresford. Frederick Fell. \$2.50.

A comprehensive and authoritative book which may prove of great value to many sufferers. Chapters on relief and cure are of special significance.

*Cook It in a Casserole.* By Florence Brobeck. Barrows. \$2.00.

Changes brought about by coupons, simple living, and a renewal of family responsibilities have revived an interest in casserole cooking. This collection of recipes is practical.

*The Waves: The Story of the Girls in Blue.* By Nancy Wilson Ross. Holt. \$2.50.

The author has had the right experiences "ashore and afloat" to make this book authoritative and informative as to both facts and implications.

*Country Cured.* By Homer Croy. Harper. \$3.00.

A humorous farm-born American boy who made good on the farm, in Hollywood, in New York, and in the writing of books tells the story of his life. Whether you were born on a farm or only wish you had been, you will enjoy this rich story of the American scene.

*Our Lady.* By Upton Sinclair. Murray & Gee. \$2.50.

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